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Marxism Today

EDITORIAL COMMENTS

LE DUAN — THE VIETNAMESE REVOLUTION

M. J. COOLEY — TRADE UNIONISM—THE TUC'S VIEW

S. FINKELSTEIN — MARSHALL McLUHAN—GENIUS OR FAKIR?

BRIAN SIMON — QUESTIONS OF IDEOLOGY AND CULTURE: A REPLY TO DISCUSSION

DISCUSSION:

ANN LAWRENCE, JACK DUNMAN — OF GEESE AND MEN

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Marxism Today

Vol. 12 No. 5

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Editorial Comments

Communist Programme in West Germany

THE Communist Party of Germany (KPD), which exists and operates in Western Germany has now been illegal for over eleven years. A campaign to secure its legalisation is meeting with great public support.

In the light of this situation, the issue of a Draft Programme of the KPD is a matter of considerable public interest—both inside and outside Western Germany.

Since Britain and Western Germany have many political, economic, and social features in common —strongly developed monopoly capitalism, a labour movement long dominated by the right wing, heavy attacks on the living standards of the people by the Government and by the employers—it is not surprising that there should be a number of similarities in the approach made in the programmes of the CPGB and the KPD.

But the Draft Programme of the KPD is directed to a people who suffered defeat in World War I, whose revolution in 1918 was betrayed, who paid for right-wing domination of the labour movement and the absence of working-class unity by twelve years of brutal Hitlerite dictatorship, who suffered catastrophe in World War II, and who are now faced with a rapid growth of neo-nazism.

The whole programme is therefore based on driving home the lessons of these experiences, above all the need for the unity of the working class and progressive forces against the main enemy —monopoly capital—whose aggressive policies, now being pushed through by the "Grand Coalition" of Christian Democrats and Social Democrats, threatens the German people with new disasters.

It is written in a simple, graphic and often moving style, which should be very effective. It contains an appeal for the widest discussion of its proposals and promises to examine all criticisms and suggestions most carefully.

It is divided into five main parts:

1. The present situation in Western Germany. Where is the Federal Republic going?
2. For a peaceful West German state based on advanced democracy.
3. For united working-class action. For a democratic alliance of all the popular forces.
4. The way to solve the national question.
5. The KPD and the International Communist Movement.

The first part summarises recent German history. It shows how the forces of the Right have always been the German people's worst enemy, and describes the great power of monopoly capital over the whole West German state. It therefore declares that West Germany is ripe for socialism—"the most democratic of all social systems".

Path to Socialism

The second section outlines the immediate needs of the people of West Germany—for peace, improved relations with the GDR, social security, defence and extension of democratic rights, fundamental democratic reforms, etc. It concludes with a longish section entitled, "The Path to Socialism". This declares that the KPD fights for a democratic transition to socialism, a transition without armed conflict, and that this is possible provided that the overwhelming majority of the working class and popular forces are won for the struggle for fundamental inroads on the power of monopoly capital, and that this struggle must be carried out by linking the struggle outside Parliament with that inside Parliament.

It proclaims that socialism in Western Germany will be based on a multi-Party system and on a very big extension of democratic rights.

The third section deals with the leading role of the working class in this struggle—the workers in the trade unions, the rank and file of the Social Democratic Party, the workers who support the Communist Party—and the necessity as well as the possibility of a wider union of a united working class with the other popular forces—the peasants, intellectuals, independent craftsmen, small business people, and especially with the young people who are now playing such an outstanding role in the fight against reaction in Western Germany.

The Programme declares that success depends on how quickly all these forces can unite around a common programme and continues:

> "We Communists will pay the most careful attention to the ideas, proposals and suggestions of all democrats. We respect their independence . . . common action demands open discussion, mutual tolerance and readiness to reach agreement."

Conditions for Reunification

Of the very greatest interest is the fourth section which outlines the KPD's views on German reunification. This section begins by pointing to the fact that Christian Democrats and Social Democrats

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alike blame all difficulties on the division of Germany into two states, a division for which the German ruling class is responsible.

But Germany was a unitary state in 1914, during the Weimar Republic and during the Third Reich. This did not prevent catastrophies for the German people. After discussing the background to the rise of the two German states, the Programme declares:

> ". . . The unification of the two German states can only result from a long historical process of deep-going democratic and social transformation in the Federal Republic. National unity must develop under definite social and political preconditions. The main question will always be—what will a united Germany look like? The Communist Party of Germany's answer is that this can only be a Germany which stands for peace; a German democracy in which things are decided not by the big trusts but by the working people; a Germany in which the power of Big Capital and of armaments interests over the economy and over the state have been eliminated for ever; a Germany in which nazism and militarism have been completely destroyed along with their social and economic roots. . . .
>
> "Only by breaking the power of monopoly capital in the Federal Republic can the obstacle to unification of the German people within a single state and on peaceful and democratic foundations be eliminated . . . what has been split by German imperialism will be united by the German working class. The united Germany of the future for which we Communists are fighting, in the interests of all working people, will be a socialist Germany."

Incomes Policy or Something Worse

Whatever Mr. Wilson may do, the days of the accursed incomes policy are numbered. A strong drive at this year's trade union conferences and its complete repudiation in the strongest and most unequivocal terms is certain at the September Trades Union Congress. Meanwhile in factory after factory, as well as in national negotiations the unions should systematically disregard it.

It should not be forgotten that it was Tory Chancellors of the Exchequer who were the first to shout for incomes policies. Here is Reginald Maudling in full flight:

> "If we wish to see a more rapid rate of growth, then we must accept the principles and practices of incomes policy. . . . Without expansion we cannot have an incomes policy; without an incomes policy we cannot have expansion. We can break out only by launching deliberately on a policy of expansion and inviting those who have responsibility in management and unions to join with us, not only in the prospects but also in the necessary conditions of a policy of expansion."
>
> (*House of Commons*, April 1963)

Now however the Tory Shadow Cabinet, with the exception of Maudling, are coming out against an incomes policy. What do they suggest in its place?

Their spokesman Mr. Carr of Mitcham wants not an incomes policy but a total wage freeze for limited periods. He told the House of Commons on March 21st:

> "A freeze however objectionable, would work for a limited period. Utter unworkability moved from a complete freeze to legislated and state administered increases. . . . Even today, the unions and the people of this country, might prefer a limited period of freeze rather than an extension of the dreary misery being meted out to them, if only they could feel certain that the time would be used to introduce a new structure of industrial relations."

Clearly the Tories are only against an incomes policy in the sense that they are for dropping all pretences at dividend limitation and price control and concentrating on total wage and salary freezes alone.

A Tory Government, Mr. Carr said, would concentrate particularly in holding down wages and salaries in Government employment and nationalised industries.

Obviously the Tories are against Labour's incomes policy only on the basis that they are in favour of something very much worse.

Tory Crocodile Tears

The Tory press would have raised the roof if Jenkins had dared to put anything extra on income tax. It is much less indignant when Jenkins puts the main burden on the working class. Mr. Peregrine Worsthorne tells the readers of the *Sunday Telegraph*:

> "The Tories do not find it easy to wax indignant since the middle-class spending compared with that of the workers, was let off relatively lightly. The Tories are angry of course, as are elements in the Labour Party about the wage freeze. But that aspect of the Budget applies to the workers in their capacity of producers. No one is angry that the great mass of the people as consumers should have received such a massive blow."

Such is a sample of the crocodile tears that the Tory canvassers are preparing to weep over the shoulders of the housewives in the forthcoming municipal elections. No wonder the rank and file Labour workers are cursing those Labour financial saviours who are saving capitalism at the expense of the workers and to the complete detriment of the Labour Movement.

False Prophets

In the years 1964 to 1966 one could not travel round the country without encountering a Labour Party, TUC, Trade Union or WEA school where some donnish characters were not preaching the virtues of incomes policy. A stout resistance was being put up by the militants but the superior sophistication if not genuinely superior knowledge

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of the tutors was telling. The tutors' arguments were relayed, with appeals for loyalty to Labour, by the General Secretaries at scores of trade union conferences. Whatever promised land these people thought they were leading us to, it was certainly not Mr. Roy Jenkins's budget and "two years hard slog".

They carried their policy triumphantly, and the Government backed it by legislation. By November 1967 when the country was forced into devaluation, the incomes policy was a proven failure. There was a balance of payments deficit almost as great as that of 1964. Why do not the bright young advocates of incomes policies tell us where they went wrong?

Even those lefts who opposed an incomes policy, advocating devaluation as an alternative, very greatly underplayed the extent to which a policy of devaluation in present-day Britain would be supplemented by a still harsher incomes policy and by greatly increased taxation. Surely some of those who led us up the garden will tell us why they came to do so.

Overtime Record

Britain is about the greatest overtime working country in the world. This is the conclusion of a research paper put forward to the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers Associations by Mr. E. G. Whybrew of the Department of Economic Affairs.

Mr. Whybrew says that 60 per cent of male workers in Britain either work more than a ten-hour day or alternatively more than a five-day week. This is due, not to pressure on the part of firms for a greater quantity of output. It is due to the practice of "making" overtime by dragging out the work during the normal working day, in order to get overtime pay.

It is the low-paid workers' form of pressure for a higher time wage. It is a notable fact that some of the nationalised industries like electricity supply have been the worst sinners in the past in forcing workers to "make overtime" in order to raise their wages to a decent level. They have now made a productivity agreement which tries to eliminate this, but it will have to be greatly improved if it is to be acceptable.

In fact a statutory minimum wage covering all industries could raise the lowest wages across the board and would be a foundation for freely negotiated wage increases above the lowest level. Yet this appears to be pushed on one side in some industries.

Unemployment Threats

How much longer are Labour Ministers going to continue to use the threat of unemployment to compel the unions to assent to their policies. When Wilson was trying to get the six months total wage freeze accepted by the unions in August 1966 he told them that unless this was accepted there would be a British crisis leading to an international economic crisis. "Failure to act would have precipitated an international crisis with unemployment in this country reaching perhaps two million" (TUC Report 1966, p. 322).

The General Council of the TUC "reached the conclusion, that the interests both of trade unionists and of the nation as a whole in the current critical situation compelled them to acquiesce in the Government's proposal and to discuss how the problems arising could best be dealt with, etc." (TUC Report 1966, p. 323).

That was the Government line. Oppose us and there will be two million unemployed. Support us and things will gradually get better. In fact they gradually got worse until the Government were forced to devalue in November 1967.

One would imagine that subsequent Chancellors would be a bit wary of frightening the TUC with phoney prophecies, but Chancellor Roy Jenkins evidently told the TUC Economic Committee that unless his current policy succeeded, there would be $1\frac{1}{2}$ or 2 million unemployed (according to what press account you read). Therefore all his current policy nostrums should be supported.

Isn't it time that this kind of pressure stopped? Mr. Jenkins knows that the capitalist international financial system is balancing on a knife edge and can topple off either side—deflation or inflation—determined not by what he or the TUC do, but on what the big banks, with the US banks and Government and the French banks and Government locked in deadly struggles, finally decide.

Wilson got a devaluation that neither he nor the TUC wanted. Jenkins can get a crisis he does not want either. He should not behave as if he was riding the whirlwind.

Scotland for Ever

The Scottish Labour Party dominated by a death wish has decided to refer the question of whether it should support a Scottish parliament back to the constituency Labour Parties.

According to the press there is opposition to a Scottish parliament on purely economic grounds. Evidently there is a group in Scotland who think that it is outrageous that the Scots, unlike almost every other nation, should have any national feelings at all. We suspect that both their political and economic slide rules are very much out of order.

Death of Ted Ainley

Marxism Today mourns the death of Ted Ainley, former secretary of the Cultural Committee of the

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Communist Party and outstanding Marxist educator and teacher.

During some forty-five years of active participation in the Labour, Trade Union and Communist movements (he joined the YCL in 1922) he occupied many responsible posts—member of the Executive Committee of the YCL in his youth; Secretary of the Association of Scientific Workers at the end of the Second World War; member of the editorial staff of the *Daily Worker*; Editor of the Communist Party weekly journal *World News* (now *Comment*), to mention only a few.

On leaving school he went to work in the garment industry and soon became active both in the YCL and in the Garment Workers' Union. During the lock-out of the miners which followed the betrayal of the General Strike 1926, he was arrested and served three months imprisonment in Preston Jail.

Throughout the whole of his life he was an avid student of political, economic, literary and social ideas. He was especially interested in Marxist economic theory, which he mastered, and for many years was secretary to the Party's Economic Sub-Committee, and Editor of its "Economic Bulletin".

In the later years of his life he became active in the cultural side of the Communist Party's work. He was mainly responsible for the organisation of the "Weeks of Marxist Debate" organised by this journal and he also participated in many of the dialogues between Marxists and Christians of recent times until his last illness.

He was a most warm and likeable personality, renowned for his wit, humour and humanity. He was much in demand as a Marxist tutor, and in his classes these gifts were reflected to the utmost.

Our movement has suffered a great loss. *Marxism Today* sends its deep condolences to May, his widow, and to all his family.

"*Dialogue*" *in Paperback*

Lawrence & Wishart have now published the *Dialogue of Christianity and Marxism*, reprinted from this journal.[1]

The Dialogue was opened with an article by Dr. John Lewis, and this was followed by a discussion in which nine Christians, Roman Catholics, Anglicans, Nonconformists and Quakers joined, together with James Klugmann and Jack Dunman from the Communist Party. John Lewis then gave his views on the discussion. The whole in fact includes contributions from four Communists and nine Christians, since one participant is both a Communist and a clergyman. It makes an intensely interesting and, we believe, important book, that breaks new ground for both Marxists and Christians in this country.

As James Klugmann concludes his Preface by saying:

> "Together Marxists and Christians form no small part of the world community. And the world of the bomb, the world where the very science that can end for ever material misery can, misused and abused, end the world; where amidst plenty poverty still grows and hunger stalks amidst surplus—that world shouts aloud for common Christian and Marxist action, and prolonged and patient search for common ground."

Lawrence & Wishart have also published (in conjunction with Seven Seas Books, of East Berlin) another very interesting paperback, *Three Works by William Morris*. This contains the two wonderful prose stories in which Morris expounded his communist convictions—"News from Nowhere" and "A Dream of John Ball"—together with his much less well-known narrative poem, "The Pilgrims of Hope", which tells the story of the Paris Commune. At 10s. 6d. this is a bargain. And it includes an Introductory Essay by A. L. Morton.

Lawrence & Wishart's next publication will be a new book by Maurice Cornforth—*The Open Philosophy and the Open Society*.[2]

Ethel Voynich

When *The Gadfly* was recently reprinted in English by Seven Seas Books[3] few of its readers, probably, knew how great an influence this novel had had in British Labour and progressive circles, and still fewer the story of its author, Ethel Voynich.

Ethel Lilian Boole was born in Cork on May 11th, 1864, daughter of a brilliant English mathematician.

The cause of the Italian patriots fighting Austrian rule had been a favourite theme of discussion in her family ever since, in 1859, a group of Italian democrats, destined for exile in America, escaped from an Austrian ship at Cork and two of them lodged with the Boole family, where Mazzini's name was revered.

In 1883 Ethel, living in England, came across *Underground Russia*, a book by Sergius Stepniak (Kravchinsky), just published, and, her imagination fired, set off for Russia in 1887 to see for herself the character of the Russian revolutionary movement. There she worked for a time as governess, travelled much, saw how the people lived, met many revolutionaries. She even attracted the attention of the Department of Police, which sent several letters to the St. Petersburg Prefect (1889)

[1] *Dialogue of Christianity and Marxism*, 110 pages, 7s. 6d.

[2] Maurice Cornforth—*The Open Philosophy and the Open Society*, 65s. (paperback edition, 30s.).

[3] Ethel Voynich, *The Gadfly*, Seven Seas Books, distributed by Central Books, 5s.

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querying her connections with "politically undesirable people".

On her return to London, she was in close contact with Russian revolutionary exiles like Kropotkin and Plekhanov. In Paris she met another famous exile, Lavrov. By now the revolutionary struggle against tyranny had become the overpowering interest in her life.

Early in 1890 Stepniak induced a group of English Liberals to form a "Society of Friends of Russian Freedom", which was chaired by Robert Spence Watson, a prominent Newcastle Liberal. Ethel Boole became the chief assistant of Stepniak and his friend Felix Volkhovsky (recently escaped from Siberia), who was editing the Society's journal—*Free Russia*.

In October 1890, Mikhail Voynich a 25-year-old member of the first Marxist Party in Poland—*Proletariat*—arrived in Britain, having also escaped from Siberian exile, and began to work for the Society. In the summer of 1892 he married Ethel Boole.

During the next few years Ethel spent much of her time studying the struggles of Mazzini, Orsini and Garibaldi for the liberation of Italy, and in 1897 published *The Gadfly*.

The Gadfly

Her first novel *The Gadfly* first appeared in New York in June 1897. The English edition (Heinemann) should have been published at the same time, but was held up until September because Queen Victoria's Diamond Jubilee was thought to make market conditions unfavourable.

The Gadfly is set in Italy—the Italy of the *Risorgimento*—and the chief characters are all involved with the Mazzini party in the national liberation struggle against the Austrian Empire.

The hero—an intelligent and pious young man—half-Italian and half-English becomes involved in the *Young Italy* movement. He is arrested as the result of a priest's betrayal of the secrecy of confessional, and thought by his comrades, including the English girl he loved, to have betrayed them. On his release he finds that another priest, his friend and mentor, is, in fact, his father. He disappears to South America.

The story proper takes place thirteen years later, when he has come back from South America, and returns to Italy as the *Gadfly*—pamphleteer, lampoonist, revolutionary, and takes part in the national struggle. His father, now a Cardinal, is portrayed with sympathy. The *Gadfly* is finally arrested, tortured, executed.[4]

In ten months three more impressions of the English edition were brought out. In March 1898, with Bernard Shaw's help, it was put on as a "dramatic opera" at the Old Vic. By 1910 eleven English editions had appeared. By this time Ethel had written two further novels—*Jack Raymond* (1901) and *Olivia Latham* (1904), which was based on her recollections and studies of oppression under Russian Tsardom.

In 1920 the Voynichs moved to New York where Ethel turned to music. She wrote *Babylon*, an oratorio inspired by the Russian Revolution; *The City under the Sea*, a cantata about Tsarist St. Petersburg and another cantata *Epitaph in the Form of a Ballad* to the memory of Roger Casement.

When her husband died in 1930, Ethel Voynich revisited Europe. In 1944 she began another novel *Put Off Thy Shoes* (published by Macmillan in 1945).

For years she had been under the impression that she was completely forgotten in Europe. Above all she had no idea of the tremendous reputation that her works, *The Gadfly* especially, had in the Soviet Union.

Only in 1955, when she was 91, did the facts reach her through an article by Yevgenia Taratuta, a Soviet literary historian. Later she was visited by a Soviet delegation, and provided a mass of facts, documents and photographs to Yevgenia Taratuta for a biography which appeared in 1962 and which has now passed into a second edition. She died on July 27th, 1960, at the age of 96.

It is good to have once again available, well and cheaply produced, a book which has had so much influence in the British Labour movement, in the Soviet Union, and in many other countries.

Discussion of Marxist Economics

Few of us, alas, can read Hungarian, and for a long period, therefore, we have been unable to follow the extremely important ideological discussions that have been taking place amongst Hungarian Marxists. In recent months and years, however, an increasing number of Hungarian works have been translated into West European languages.

We would like to welcome in this connection the publication by the Institute of Economics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences of a volume of essays on aspects of Marxist economics.[5]

The six essays include studies by Robert Hoch and Jozsef Berenyi on "Planning the Rate of Increase in Consumption", and by F. Molnar on the "Reproductions Process of the United States represented in Marxist schemes of Reproduction".

The non-specialist in political economy will find of especial interest the essay by Academician I. Friss on "Political Economy of Socialism in the Making".

[4] See Arnold Kettle, *E. L. Voynich: a Forgotten English Novelist* in *Essays in Criticism*, Vol. VII, No. 2.

[5] *For the Progress of Marxist Economics, Selected Studies*, edited by Tamas Földi, Akademiai Kiado, Budapest, 1967.

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Prior to the October Revolution, he writes, there existed a school of thought amongst socialists that held that political economy would disappear with the socialisation of the means of production. This idea was partly revived in the Soviet Union after the October Revolution, and, later, in other socialist countries.

Academician Friss agrees with the statement made in 1964 by the Polish Marxist economist Oscar Lange that "socialism is a novel economic formation which is still in the making. The economic theory of socialism is, therefore, *only just taking shape*."

He asks the complex question *why*, then, is it still taking shape? One of the reasons he thinks were the circumstances created by the personality cult, first in the Soviet Union, and later in other socialist countries. In those years, he writes, "economic statistics and the facts of economic life were inaccessible not only to the public but even to economists".

Moreover in the field of economics, and in all social sciences "a dogmatic interpretation of Marx and Lenin became predominant, with Stalin jealously striving to appropriate for himself the monopoly of further developing Marxism-Leninism". Academician Friss analyses in a most interesting way the effects of Stalin's writing on economic laws and in particular, the economic laws of socialist society.

But if the political economy of socialism is *still in the making* this is not just a question of mistakes or personality cult. Under all circumstances its development would be a process:

> "if Man wants to change his society, he must first know it! This relates also to the Man of socialist society, i.e. to the group of persons, the leading 'cluster' who, trusted by socialist society, are called to manage and direct the economy. The more intensively they become acquainted with the laws governing the development of society, the more they will be able to enact laws and take measures which bring about the effect wanted, i.e. which thus result in a conscious shaping and directing by Man of his own destiny."

But the reality Man must get to know, is *complex, many-sided, and in constant movement*. The cognition, perception and processing of this reality can only be, writes Academician Friss, "a continuous, ever improving process". It can only be achieved by scientific methods:

> "... the idea that even under socialism man does not become immediately able to mould his destiny though he has the possibility of doing so gradually, sounds like sacrilege in the ears of those who imagine themselves the sovereign masters of their society. This is exactly what the sectarian politicians who habitually mistake their wishes for reality imagine."

What is necessary to speed the development of the political economy of socialism? Academician Friss describes the work of the Hungarian Institute of Economics to this end which certainly contributed to the comprehensive reform of economic control and management recently adopted by the Hungarian Government.

Lenin on the Youth

Whilst the *Collected Works* are well nigh complete, a number of useful collections are being published of Lenin's writings on particular subjects. Two such compilations that have just appeared are Lenin *On the United States of America*, and Lenin *On the Youth*.[6]

There have been several previous volumes of Lenin's writings on the youth, but this is much the most detailed to date. It includes all Lenin's articles, speeches and letters which, in one way or another, touch on the problems of students and youth.

One thing that is common to them all is his very great confidence in the youth, their initiative and capacity.

There is a little known letter to A. A. Bogdanov and S. I. Gusev, written in February 1905. He is criticising in no uncertain terms the formalism, over-caution and timidity amongst the people around *Vperyod* (Forward), the illegal Bolshevik newspaper. Some had claimed that there was a lack of people. Lenin, indignant, attacks:

> "We need young forces. I am for shooting on the spot anyone who presumes to say that there are no people to be had. The people in Russia are legion, all we have to do is recruit young people more widely and boldly, more boldly and widely, and again more widely and again more boldly, without *fearing them*. . . . Get rid of all the old habits of immobility, of respect for rank, and so on. Form *hundreds* of circles of *Vperyodists* from among the youth and encourage them to work at full blast. Enlarge the Committee *threefold* by accepting young people into it. . . ."

In September 1916, Lenin wrote a review of the *Youth International*, which had just appeared in Switzerland, and which stood in militant opposition to the war. He discussed the attitude of older socialists to the youth:

> "Of course, the youth organ *still* lacks theoretical clarity and consistency. Perhaps it may never acquire them, precisely because it is the organ of seething, turbulent, enquiring youth.
>
> "However, our attitude towards the lack of theoretical clarity on the part of *such* people must be entirely different from what our attitude is and should be towards the theoretical muddle in the heads, and the lack of revolutionary consistency in the hearts, of our 'O.C.ists', 'Socialist Revolutionaries', Tolstoyans, anarchists, the European Kautskyites

[6] V. I. Lenin—*On the United States of America*, Lawrence & Wishart, 21s., and V. I. Lenin—*On the Youth*, Lawrence & Wishart, 10s. 6d.

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('Centre'), etc. Adults who lay claim to lead and teach the proletariat, but actually mislead it, are one thing: against such people a ruthless, struggle must be waged.

"Organisations of *youth*, however, which openly declare that they are still learning, that their main task is to train party workers for the socialist parties, are quite another thing. Such people must be given every assistance. We must be patient with their faults and strive to correct them gradually, mainly by *persuasion*, and not by fighting them. The middle-aged and the aged often *do not know how* to approach the youth, for the youth must of necessity advance to socialism *in a different way, by other paths, in other circumstances* than their fathers."

Marxism Today Index

The Index for *Marxism Today*, 1967, is now available. Those wishing to obtain a copy should send a stamped addressed envelope to *Marxism Today*, 16 King Street, London, W.C.2.

The Vietnamese Revolution

Le Duan

Le Duan is the Secretary General of the Lao Dong Party (the Vietnam Workers' Party).

We print below the second half of a long article by Le Duan—"Forward under the Glorious Banner of the October Revolution"—written on the occasion of the 50th Anniversary of the October Revolution, and published in booklet form in English by the Foreign Languages Publishing House, Hanoi. The sub-titles are ours.

THE October Revolution has proved that conditions for a world proletarian revolution are ripe and that the Marxist-Leninist line of proletarian revolution is perfectly correct. It has awakened the Oriental peoples and paved the way for the introduction of Marxism-Leninism into Vietnam.

The theory and practice of the October Revolution have helped the Vietnamese revolutionaries realise that national liberation must be linked to world proletarian revolution. Comrade Ho Chi Minh, the first Vietnamese communist, has assimilated the Marxist-Leninist theory, in particular the thesis on national revolution in the colonies, and propagated it in our country.

In 1930, the Party of the Vietnamese working class came into being, opening a new page in the history of our revolution. For the first time after nearly seventy years of slavery, the Vietnamese people are led by a staunch and clear-sighted vanguard party, and guided by a correct scientific, revolutionary line.

The Party's Programme

Following Lenin's teachings on revolution in the countries of the Orient, the Vietnamese revolutionaries have applied the Marxist-Leninist principles to the concrete and specific conditions of the Vietnamese society. The first Political Programme of the Indochinese Communist Party (now the Vietnam Workers' Party) has clearly stated that in the epoch of imperialism and proletarian revolution, while socialist revolution has triumphed in the Soviet Union, the Vietnamese revolution has become a component of world revolution. In leading the Vietnamese revolution, the Party has firmly grasped and resolutely upheld the banner of independence and democracy, and correctly solved the peasant problem regarded as the essential content of the national question, and the agrarian problem, as the basic content of the democratic revolution.

The Party's programme with its mottoes "national independence" and "land to the tiller", closely combines the anti-imperialist task—national liberation—with the anti-feudal task—struggle for democracy; it correctly reflects the objective law of development of the Vietnamese society, a colonial and semi-feudal society, meets the basic and urgent requirements of the Vietnamese people, and opens the way for the Vietnamese revolution to advance towards socialism. Thanks to a correct programme and its practice, the Party has strongly aroused the national spirit of the people, mobilised the immense revolutionary force of the labouring peasantry, which, combined with that of the working class, make the hard core of the national-democratic revolution. At the same time, the Party has built the worker-peasant alliance into a solid bloc under the leadership of the working class to serve as the basis for a broad national united front, the mainstay of the democratic people's power.

The said strategic line and tactics did away with all conceptions which blurred class antagonisms and helped the workers and peasants get rid of the influence of bourgeois reformists, petty-bourgeois revolutionaries and Trotskyite provocateurs; hence it has ensured the exclusive leadership of the working class.

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A History of Struggle

In the history of the Vietnamese people's struggle against French colonialism, many patriotic movements followed one upon another, many armed insurrections broke out; some established resistance bases in hardly accessible mountain regions for a long-term struggle, as the uprising of Phan Dinh Phung which lasted ten years, or that of Hoang Hoa Tham stretching over nearly thirty years. However, none of these movements brought the national-liberation cause to success. Their failure was due to many causes, but it clearly proves that revolution must be made by the broad masses, it must be a truly popular movement if it is to succeed. As Lenin said, revolution must be the work of the masses.

Right after the founding of the Indochinese Communist Party, a mass revolutionary movement flared up throughout Vietnam, the apex of which were the Nghe An and Ha Tinh Soviets (1930-1931). Workers and peasants in these provinces rose up to overthrow the colonial rule and the local administration of mandarins and despots, setting up a worker-peasant power in some rural areas. Though suppressed, the uprising strongly awakened the revolutionary spirit of the entire people and pointed to the immense revolutionary capabilities of the workers and peasants.

From 1936 to 1939, in face of the fascist threat, the Party quickly adopted a new orientation, shifting from underground to semi-clandestine and semi-legal activities, ingeniously combining these forms of struggle, even using "people's councils" and "colonial councils" to initiate throughout the country a powerful movement against the reactionary colonialists, feudalists and aggressive fascists, for the conquest of democratic freedoms, the improvement of living standards and safeguarding world peace. This campaign involved millions of people and politically educated broad masses of the workers and peasants, greatly enhancing their patriotism and class consciousness.

After the outbreak of the Second World War and the occupation of Indochina by the Japanese fascists, the Party shifted its main activities to the countryside; while continuing to build up the political forces of the masses, it created armed forces, started a countrywide patriotic movement and local guerilla activities against the Japanese and French fascists, and set up the Viet Bac[1] resistance zone and guerilla bases.

The August Revolution

In August 1945, taking advantage of the great victory of the Soviet Union over fascism—which was a golden opportunity—the Party launched a sweeping general insurrection. In this the Party relied on the existing political forces in urban and rural areas, combined their action with that of the people's armed forces, smashed the enemy's leading organs in the capital and other towns, liquidated his rule in rural areas, and established a revolutionary power throughout the country. Thanks to this mass action the August Revolution rapidly triumphed from North to South.

The local insurrections and revolutionary waves started and led by our Party since 1930 were preludes to the August Revolution which creatively applied Lenin's principles on revolutionary violence and insurrection to conquer power. The August Revolution aptly combined political struggle with military struggle, local take-over in the countryside with insurrection in towns, long-term preparation of political and military forces with rapid mobilisation of the masses at the favourable moment to overthrow the imperialist and feudal power.

The August Revolution constituted a brilliant achievement of the heroic struggle for liberation waged by the Vietnamese people for nearly a century. It liquidated the colonialist and feudal power, and founded the Democratic Republic of Vietnam, the first worker-peasant State in South-East Asia, ushering in a new era in the history of the country. The August Revolution and the subsequent achievements of the Vietnamese revolution have proved the correctness, and contributed to the development of the theory of proletarian revolution in the countries of the Orient.

Imperialist Aggression

The August Revolution dealt a heavy blow at international imperialism and its colonial system. That is why the imperialists co-ordinated their action to destroy the Vietnamese revolution. Protected by British troops, helped by the American imperialists, the French colonialists came back and connived with the native reactionary forces to unleash a war of aggression in an attempt to re-establish colonial and feudal rule.

Under the leadership of the Party with comrade Ho Chi Minh at its head, the entire Vietnamese people took to arms and resolutely waged an all-out and protracted war. Relying mainly on their own means, they set up a strong people's army, built up their forces while fighting, consolidated their rear while attacking at the front, waged an armed resistance while gradually implementing democratic reforms, then land reform to improve the living conditions of the peasants and boost the potential of the patriotic war in every field.

Thanks to the Party's correct leadership and our people's ardent patriotism and indomitability, people's war vigorously developed in scope and strength, driving the French Expeditionary Corps to

[1] Mountain region north of the Red River (*Publ.*).

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a stalemate then defeat. The great victory of the Chinese revolution, which had liberated the entire Chinese mainland, greatly stimulated our people in their struggle, reinforced our resistance and created favourable conditions for our people and armed forces to deliver decisive blows at the enemy. The glorious victory of Dien Bien Phu brought the resistance war to a successful end, sealed the fate of the French colonialists in Indochina and compelled them to sign the Geneva Agreements recognising Vietnam's independence, sovereignty, unity and territorial integrity.

The Revolution Continues

However, the national-liberation revolution of the Vietnamese people has not yet come to a close. While the completely liberated Northern part has shifted to socialist revolution, the South has to fight on against the aggression of the American imperialists, against their and their henchmen's rule to achieve the national-democratic people's revolution throughout the country. Indeed, for nearly a quarter of a century US imperialism has been the number one enemy of the Vietnamese people.

Having failed in helping the French colonialists to reconquer Vietnam, in prolonging and expanding the Indochina War, the Americans supplanted the French to continue their aggression against South Vietnam with a view to perpetuating the partition of our country, turning South Vietnam into a neo-colony and military base, preparing an offensive against North Vietnam and the socialist camp, threatening the independence of the peoples of Vietnam and of Indochina as a whole, and halting the revolution in South Vietnam and South-East Asia. This is a component of the counter-revolutionary global strategy of US imperialism to check the revolutionary wave storming the bulwark of US-led international imperialism.

In South Vietnam, US imperialism has set up a dictatorial, fascist puppet administration to drown the patriotic movement in blood, and force the people to accept a neo-colonial regime. But the South is part and parcel of one and the same Vietnam, its people belong to a nation which has a glorious four-thousand-year history, struggled for nearly a century to break the fetters of colonialism and which, having actually reconquered its freedom and independence, was shaping its own destinies. No wonder that the South Vietnamese people resolutely oppose the policies of aggression of the American imperialists, and their and their henchmen's policy of enslavement so as to wrest back their revolutionary gains, conquer their right to live, and choose a way of development suitable for the general evolution of the times.

Fighting under the glorious banner of the National Front for Liberation and at the forefront of the defence of their motherland, our staunch and heroic compatriots in the South continue writing the most brilliant pages of our national history. The process of the South Vietnamese revolution is one of uniting, organising and developing all revolutionary and patriotic forces to smash the American imperialists' aggression and the puppet ruling clique to liberate the South, defend the North, reunify the motherland, safeguard the independence and peace in Vietnam, peace in South-East Asia and the world. The immediate and basic objective of the South Vietnamese people is *to achieve independence, democracy, peace, neutrality and prosperity and to advance towards national reunification.* To this end, there is no other way than to use *revolutionary violence* to oppose the brutal and cynical violence of the American imperialists and their henchmen.

Forms of Struggle

The August Revolution, like people's revolutions in other countries, has taught the South Vietnamese revolutionaries that any revolution with a marked popular character must use both political and military forces to secure victory. Revolution being the uprising of the oppressed and exploited masses, one must adopt the revolutionary mass viewpoint to understand revolutionary violence which involves two forces—political and military forces—and two forms of struggle—political and armed struggle—and thereby to realise the offensive position of revolution when revolutionary situations are ripe.

On the contrary, if one considers revolutionary violence merely from the point of view of armed struggle, and consequently takes into account only the military force of the two sides to appraise the balance of forces between revolution and counter-revolution, mistakes will be inevitable: either one will underestimate the strength of the revolution and dare not mobilise the masses for insurrection, or, once the insurrection has been launched, one will not dare step up the offensive to push ahead the revolution, or, when the armed struggle has been unleashed, one cannot avoid falling back to a defensive strategy.

In 1959-1960, when the American imperialists and their henchmen used most barbarous fascist means to sow terror and carry out mass slaughter, the South Vietnamese revolutionaries held that the enemy had sustained a basic political defeat and could no longer rule as in the past, while the people had come to realise more and more clearly that they could no longer live under the enemy's yoke and had to rise up and wage a life-and-death struggle to liberate themselves. Under those circumstances the South Vietnamese people rose up, using mainly political struggle combined with armed struggle, broke the enemy's grip, controlled large rural areas,

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wrested back power, redistributed land, set up "self-management committees", made every effort to develop their forces in every field, and launched a widespread people's war to carry on their liberation struggle.

In South Vietnam, as the vast countryside has a natural economy not very dependent on the towns and an almost exclusively peasant population living on agriculture, the aggressors and their henchmen ruling in urban centres cannot establish a strict control over the rural areas. That is why, when conditions are ripe for revolution, the villages constitute the weakest spot where the puppet administration becomes shaky and sinks into a crisis, hence the possibility of most rapidly starting *local insurrections* and of destroying the enemy's power apparatus considerably.

After liberating extensive rural areas, the people gradually built up large and strong armed forces, rapidly organised powerful political forces, vigorously boosted the revolutionary movement throughout the South, stepped up political and military struggle, firmly upheld their offensive position, foiled all the enemy's political and military schemes, and kept on pushing forward the South Vietnamese revolution. Since then, *the close combination of political and military struggle constitutes the basic form of revolutionary violence in South Vietnam*, the most suitable one to resist neo-colonialism. It has been used not only in the course of insurrections, but also in dealing with the American imperialists' "special warfare" and "limited warfare". This combination of political and military struggle is carried out in accordance with the balance of forces in the *three strategic rural, urban and hill-forest areas* as well as with the general tasks of the revolution and the specific tasks of each period.

Worker-Peasant Alliance

Like the national-democratic revolution all over the country in the past, the present South Vietnamese revolution has the workers and peasants as its main force and the worker-peasant alliance led by the working class as the corner-stone of the national united front. Therefore, it cannot repose exclusively on the revolutionary forces in the countryside, but has to build up revolutionary forces in the towns as well, and impel revolutionary struggle in both of these areas. In the process of the struggle the revolutionary movements in both areas have been closely co-ordinated, greatly influencing and vigorously impelling each other. If the revolutionary upsurge in the countryside some years ago made its impact strongly felt upon the revolutionary movement in the towns, the seething struggle of the urban masses now has created highly favourable conditions for uprisings in the countryside and the extension of people's war.

The recent fierce political struggle of the townsfolk has restrained, sometimes slowed down or seriously upset, the military activities of the enemy on the battlefields, thus efficaciously helping the offensive of the revolutionary armed forces; conversely, the military successes on the battlefields, like the repeated attacks by the Liberation troops against the enemy's rear bases and dens in the towns and cities have accelerated the growth of the urban revolutionary movement.

In short, *the South Vietnamese revolution develops by using the revolutionary violence of the masses to launch local insurrections in the countryside, organising revolutionary forces in both rural and urban areas —military and political forces alike—and holding firm the offensive position to attack the enemy with military and political actions and agitation among his troops in all the three strategic rural, urban and hill-forest areas so as to smash gradually all his military and political activities and win complete victory.*

Like the United States military strategy in the world, in South-East Asia and in South Vietnam, American neo-colonialism is a passive and patched-up strategy, the product of a weakened position in face of the repeated offensives of the world revolutionary forces. Besides, neo-colonialism in South Vietnam went bankrupt from the outset when the American aggressors and their henchmen had to resort to outright fascist methods against the people and the very social forces that they wanted to win over and deceive. By using "special warfare" and "limited warfare" to salvage a policy which had gone bankrupt from the very beginning, the American imperialists have been driven from one passive position to another, and the more they wriggle the worse their quandary and the heavier their setbacks.

Towards Victory

With correct and flexible revolutionary methods the South Vietnamese people have overthrown the Ngo Dinh Diem regime, plunged the puppet administration into endless crises and the Americans into a "tunnel with no end in sight". With these methods people's war has reached an unprecedented height, foiled the American imperialists' "special war" strategy and that of "limited war" in its initial stage, a very atrocious war of aggression waged by 1,200,000 men with most barbarous weapons, which has already cost 50 billion dollars.

Having sustained bitter setbacks and being bogged down in an irremediable morass the American imperialists strive on the one hand to extend their war of aggression in South Vietnam, and on the other, cynically to carry out a war of destruction against North Vietnam in the hope of shaking the

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determination to fight of the entire Vietnamese people, of preventing the North from helping the South, and of staving off an inevitable defeat. Over the past three years the Vietnamese people in the North have been resolutely defending their motherland, duly punishing all of the enemy's "escalation" steps, and have won great successes. Neither American planes nor warships could intimidate them.

In the fire of war North Vietnam continues advancing firmly towards socialism and fulfilling its duty as the big rear towards the South—the big front. The resounding successes of North Vietnam are due to the dictatorship of the proletariat, to the excellence of the socialist regime, to the awareness of the labouring people of being collective masters of society, to the patriotism and unshakable will for national reunification of the entire Vietnamese people, and to the correct, clear-sighted leadership of the Vietnam Workers' Party Central Committee and President Ho Chi Minh.

Standing in the forefront of the struggle against the American imperialist aggressors, the Vietnamese people are accomplishing their sacred national tasks while performing heavy and glorious international obligations, thus helping to solve the fundamental contradictions of the world in this epoch. The struggle of the Vietnamese people forms the spearhead of the world revolutionary tide, the peak of the common struggle of the labouring people and all nations for peace, independence, democracy and social progress. That is why it has been enjoying the deep sympathy and active help of all revolutionary forces in the world, first of all, of the socialist camp. This huge and valuable support constitutes one of the decisive factors for the victory of the patriotic struggle of the Vietnamese people against US aggression, for national salvation.

Holding higher the banner of national liberation, peace and revolution, the entire Vietnamese people will advance firmly towards final victory, thereby fulfilling also their lofty international obligations towards the labouring people and other nations throughout the world.

Socialist Revolution in North Vietnam

Thirteen years ago, North Vietnam entered the stage of socialist revolution. This met the requirements of North Vietnamese society in the process of its development, and the eager aspirations of the working class and people. Moreover, to take the North to socialism is to satisfy the urgent demands of the revolution in the whole country and of the struggle for national reunification.

The Third Congress of the Vietnam Workers' Party has declared that North Vietnam, with a backward agriculture in which small farming predominated, can by-pass the stage of capitalist development and proceed straight to socialism. This thesis which was put forward in the 1930 Political Programme of the Party is now confirmed in practice.

The socialist revolution in North Vietnam is the integration of three revolutionary processes—revolution in the relations of production, technological revolution, cultural and ideological revolution—aiming at ceaselessly heightening the people's material and moral living standards on the basis of an advanced technique and a high labour productivity, on the basis of the establishment of the labouring people's right as collective masters of the whole economy, down to each region and each production unit. Each of these three revolutions has a different content, objective and role, but all of them must be carried out together, throughout the transition period, for they are closely linked to one another, influence and impel one another.

After three years of economic rehabilitation, North Vietnam entered the period of economic and cultural transformation and development. While laying the initial material and technical bases of socialism, we relied on the people's democratic power, exercising the function of the dictatorship of the proletariat, to make the *revolution in the relations of production*. This was a necessary step of the socialist revolution, for we had first of all to transform the private capitalist industry and trade, and the small individual economy—peasant for the most part—in order to establish socialist relations of production, and make them predominant in the two forms of ownership—that by the entire people and collective ownership.

In the development of the modes of production it is the productive forces which assume the decisive role, but to promote these, appropriate relations of production are needed. The socialist relations of production set up in North Vietnam play a revolutionary part of great importance. They constitute the essential factor which makes it possible for the productive forces to develop and create social premises to consolidate the dictatorship of the proletariat and further the ideological and cultural revolution. They form one of the main motive forces of the socialist revolution in North Vietnam. In the initial period of socialist building, when the material and technical bases are still weak, if one knows how to rely on the superiority of the socialist relations of production in order to use properly the labour force brought into play by the development of co-operatives, improve the organisation and management of production, gradually improve techniques while enhancing the sense of being collective masters among the people, then one can obtain a higher productivity, boost economic construction and develop production.

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In the revolution of relations of production, one must not only transform the relations of ownership of the means of production, but also pay attention to satisfactorily solving the problem of distribution, so that in the process of distribution the labouring people realise that they are really masters of social economy. To this end, one must strictly apply the principle of distribution according to the work done while ensuring the satisfaction of everybody's basic living requirements in accordance with the development of social production. One must also closely combine the method of material incentives with political education and moral stimulation to heighten the people's ardour in their work. The revolution in the relations of production does not come to an end with the establishment of new ones, but continues throughout the transition period; it must unceasingly consolidate, develop and perfect those relations of production at the same time as proceeding with the building of the material and technical bases of socialism and the improvement of economic management.

Technological Revolution

For a country which advances towards socialism by-passing the stage of capitalist development, the transformation of relations of production is only a first step in the whole revolutionary process. To radically transform the Vietnamese society and firmly set up a socialist mode of production, the key problem is to promote the *technological revolution*. After the establishment of the dictatorship of the proletariat and new relations of production, the technological revolution constitutes the most important motive force to take North Vietnam to socialism. Only by accelerating the tempo of the technological revolution can one bring the productive forces to a high degree of development, create the material bases for the consolidation of the new relations of production and for the building of an advanced culture and science, thereby ensuring victory for socialism.

In the present stage, the main task of the technological revolution in North Vietnam which forms the essence of socialist industrialisation, consists in building a modern industry capable of transforming agriculture and supplying technical equipment to all economic branches in order to turn an economy based on manual labour into a highly mechanised one. In Vietnam, the technological revolution comprises two parallel processes: we have on the one hand to rely on the economic and technical aid of the socialist camp and on international co-operation so as to shift from manual labour straight to modern and ultra-modern technique; on the other hand, to proceed from manual labour to semi-mechanisation and mechanisation. That is the best way, for it tallies with the concrete possibilities of North Vietnam and wins time to overcome the scientific and technical lag of our country.

The advance from a small individual production to large-scale socialist production obviously requires *a new division of labour in the entire society* on modern material and technical bases. This new division of labour is closely related to the three above-mentioned revolutions, particularly to the technological revolution. To push ahead the technological revolution, to improve the instruments of production and provide a new technical equipment to all branches, is to create favourable conditions for a rational division of labour in each branch as well as in the whole economy, which in turn influences and stimulates the technological revolution. The key problem at present is to equip agriculture with a new technique in order to increase its productivity, and apply a rational division of labour in agriculture and in the country's various regions, then on this basis to supply enough manpower for the continuous advance of industry. Only by closely associating the technological revolution with a new division of labour can we strongly boost both the national and regional economy, ensure a harmonious development of industry and agriculture, of production and distribution, impel the productive forces, raise the productivity of social labour, and tap the latent riches of the country in the most rational and profitable manner.

Ideological Revolution

In the process of socialist revolution, the establishment of a new mode of production and the building of an economic basis constitute the decisive factor, but from a subjective point of view, the impact of man plays a very important role, for it is under the socialist regime that the labouring people make history consciously; moreover, the socialist system alone can liberate man from all social and natural fetters, and restore his genuine value. Indeed, it is a very great leap for a wage slave or an owner of a small plot of land to become a collective master of the means of production, of the society. This leap requires that the labouring people profoundly understand their role as collective masters and strive to acquire the capacities and virtues needed to be the true masters of the society, of nature and of their own selves. All this shows that the *ideological and cultural revolution* acts also as an important motive force in socialist revolution.

From the ideological point of view, this revolution aims at educating and transforming the various strata of labouring people in accordance with the requirements of the new social regime, at imbuing them with socialist ethics, with a Marxist-Leninist world outlook and a communist conception of life. From

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the cultural point of view, its objective is to liquidate illiteracy, raise the knowledge of the labouring people, transform backward customs and habits, and train an intelligentsia of the working class faithful to socialism. In short, the cultural and ideological revolution must on the one hand serve the revolution in the relations of production and the technological revolution, and on the other, form new men possessed of the best revolutionary virtues, the best qualifications for production, a high scientific and technical level, and a fine, rich, healthy cultural and moral life, men capable of continuing and promoting the precious national traditions while eliminating the negative aspects of the regime of small production and of the colonial and feudal society.

Agriculture and Industry

The socialist line of economic transformation and construction in North Vietnam is best reflected in two big movements: agricultural co-operativisation and socialist industrialisation. For lack of a large-scale industry, the development of agricultural co-operatives has to aim at water conservancy and improvement of farming techniques in order to develop a diversified agriculture as *a basis for industrial development*. However, agriculture cannot advance vigorously by itself unless it is impelled by large-scale industry. Therefore, the only way to transform the country's backward agriculture is to build a socialist industry, regarding this task as the central one of the transition period and to give priority to *heavy industry as the corner-stone of the national economy*. In the process of industrialisation, one must have a correct orientation by developing both the centrally-run industry and the regional industry, by serving first of all agricultural production and the consolidation of co-operatives, and by ensuring a harmonious development for industry and agriculture so as to make national economy progress vigorously and steadily.

The three above-mentioned revolutions constitute the basic content of the socialist revolution in North Vietnam, the steps to be taken by a backward agricultural country in its advance towards socialism. To bring those three revolutions, agricultural co-operativisation and socialist industrialisation to success, one has to wage a fierce class struggle to solve the problem: who will win between socialism and capitalism. If formerly the struggle for power was the basic content of class struggle, now that power has been conquered, *to carry out those three revolutions constitutes the basic content of class struggle throughout the transition period towards socialism and communism. Those are also the essential tasks of the dictatorship of the proletariat.*

As Lenin said:

> ". . . The dictatorship of the proletariat . . . is not only the use of force . . . against the exploiters and not even mainly the use of force . . . The guarantee of its effectiveness and success is the fact that the proletariat represents and creates a higher type of social organisation of labour compared with capitalism. This is the essence. This is the source of the strength and the guarantee of the inevitable complete triumph of communism."[2]

The dictatorship of the proletariat is an extremely important motive force of the socialist revolution. The North Vietnamese people have been wielding this efficacious instrument to transform the old economy, build a new economy and a new culture; besides, they firmly use this weapon to smash all war schemes and acts of the American imperialists and their henchmen, and to repress the reactionary elements who want to sabotage the people's revolutionary work. To bring the dictatorship of the proletariat into full play the most important and decisive problem is unceasingly to enhance and strengthen the leadership of the working class, to build a Marxist-Leninist Party that is staunch, united and closely linked to the masses, to strive to consolidate the worker-peasant alliance, and to rely on the workers and collective peasants as the main force to build socialism.

In more than ten years of socialist revolution, the North Vietnamese people have scored great achievements: the North Vietnamese economy and society have undergone far-reaching transformations. Socialist transformation of the economy has been achieved in the main. Co-operativised agriculture has overcome many trials and proved its superiority over the former individual agriculture. After the first five-year plan (1961-1965), the initial bases of heavy industry have been established together with many enterprises of light and regional industry. From 1955 to 1965 industrial production increased by 22 per cent every year and agricultural production by 4.5 per cent; the part of industrial and handicraft production in the national economy rose from 17 to 53 per cent. Education, medical work and culture also made outstanding progress: illiteracy was wiped out, nearly one out of four people went to school, the number of doctors was 25 times higher. These initial achievements have brought about a new strength and constitute a source of enthusiasm which stimulates the North Vietnamese people to build a happy life and resolutely defend the socialist regime.

Promoting their ardent patriotism and their sense of being collective masters of the country, the seventeen million North Vietnamese will certainly foil the American imperialists' war of destruction and, together with their brothers and sisters in the South, they will fight to the end to achieve national liberation and reunify their motherland. The struggle has

[2] Lenin, *A Great Beginning*.

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not come to an end; the Vietnamese people are fully aware that the American imperialists remain obstinate and perfidious, reckless and truculent. However, by their heroic and tenacious struggle, with the active and considerable assistance of the fraternal socialist countries, the sympathy and support of progressive mankind, they will certainly win final victory.

Vietnamese Revolution and World Revolution

Fifty years constitute a short span in the history of mankind, as in the history of a nation. But when reviewing the tremendous progress and splendid victories of the Soviet people and of world revolution over half a century, progress and victories achieved thanks to the October Revolution, we feel a boundless enthusiasm and a firm confidence in the invincibility of Marxism-Leninism, in the triumph of world revolution and in the bright future of communism. We are deeply grateful to the October Revolution, to Karl Marx and Vladimir Ilitch Lenin who have opened the path of liberation to progressive mankind. The glorious achievements of the October Revolution will live for ever in the hearts of the world's people. For ever the radiant light of the October Revolution will illuminate all continents.

The Vietnamese revolution is a component of world revolution and its successes have never been separated from the latter's. For the Vietnamese people, the victories of the October Revolution, of the resistance against fascism, of the August Revolution and of the Chinese revolution, of the resistance against the French colonialists and the American imperialists at present, are great events in one and the same historical chain. In the jubilant atmosphere of the 50th anniversary of the Great Socialist October Revolution, a great festival for the labouring people the world over, the Vietnamese communists, working class and people warmly hail the fraternal Soviet Communist Party and people and wish them more outstanding successes in the establishment of the material and technical bases of communism. The glorious victory of the October Revolution and the grand achievements of the Soviet people have been, and will always be, a great stimulus for the Vietnamese people.

In response to the sacred appeal for national salvation made by President Ho Chi Minh "Nothing is more precious than independence and freedom", the Vietnamese people, united as one man, are determined to defeat the American aggressors, to liberate the South, defend the North, and advance towards the building of a peaceful, united, independent, democratic, strong and prosperous Vietnam. We are confident that thanks to their valiant and hard fight on the battlefields and their selfless labour in the fire of the war, our people will create a radiant life in Vietnam, just as the heroic sacrifices of the October Revolution combatants and the army of Soviet labouring people have built the majestic work we see today in the great Lenin's motherland.

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Trade Unionism—the TUC's View

M. J. Cooley

THAT the TUC's evidence to the Royal Commission on the Trade Unions and Employers Associations[1] should have evoked condemnations of being "negative" from the press, and "disappointing" from the C.B.I. is a clear indication of the extent to which the Establishment is determined to undermine the Trade Union Movement of this country.

The reluctant acquiescence in practice which has characterised the role of the TUC during the attack on the trade union movement in the past three years should now apparently be underwritten by acquiescence in theory. Since this is only partially conceded in the TUC's evidence, it is likely that intensified efforts will be made to introduce restrictive legislation in an attempt to perpetuate the defensive position into which the Trade Union movement has retreated during recent years.

The Labour correspondent of *The Times*, Mr. Eric Wigham, who is himself a member of the Royal Commission, states "the negative character of the TUC evidence may strengthen the case of those who regard legislation as the only solution" (*The Times*, November 24th, 1966). In only two aspects of the evidence is this "negative" character discernible. Firstly in placing its evidence in a historical perspective the TUC has inevitably had to demonstrate that such rights as trade unions have today were established out of bitter struggle and were never granted by the benevolence of the employers, the judiciary or the State. The reality of the class struggle which quite clearly emerges from the paragraphs dealing with this aspect may well induce trade unionists to ask why, if the basic relationship between employer and employee has not changed, this process of struggle should not continue. Secondly the traditional and well-founded hostility of trade unions to interference by the law in the field of industrial relations is reiterated. In an effort to improve such legislation as does exist, specific proposals are contained in supplementary evidence which seek to eliminate differing interpretations of the 1906 Trades Dispute Act as a result of the Rookes versus Barnard case in 1961.

Apart from this the evidence is "positive" in that it is a detailed plan for class collaboration. It is clearly implied, if not stated directly, in the chapters entitled "Trade Unions and the State", and "Trade Unions and the Economy", that such collaboration should take place and it should be in a modern capitalist state. The future role of the Unions is seen as pressure to bring about that modernisation with a voice for the TUC at national level in the overall economic planning of the country and increased industrial "democracy" for the lower echelons, on the factory floor.

The anticipated result is a fairer share in the national wealth for all. The irreconcilable conflict between the interests of capital and labour which by their very nature must deny those who work the economic and social advancement they demand, is ignored. A socialist state in which the working class control the means of production, distribution and exchange is clearly not envisaged as a prerequisite to meet the demands put forward elsewhere in the evidence.

Historical Background

It is in dealing with the historical reasons for the existence of trade unions that the evidence is at its best, "the individual contract between an employee and an employer does not reflect a position of equal strength on the two sides. Equality before the law is only relevant to the observance of the contract and not to the terms or to the procedure by which it is made". (Page 29) The traditional manner by which the individual worker has sought to redress this inequality is clearly stated:

> "whilst the position of the individual employee, both in law and in practice, is one of subordination, individual employees together recognise that it is through combination that they can develop a means, the essential means which they possess, to harness their own potential strength. It is in the nature of the employment situation that working people readily identify themselves with their fellows in groups. This feeling of collective identity enhances the economic freedom of the individual, a freedom which rests on the knowledge that unity is strength". (Page 30)

There is in this section of the evidence a clear class recognition that the rights of workers are established

[1] "*Trade Unionism: the Evidence of the Trade Union Congress to the Royal Commission on Trade Unions and Employers Associations*", TUC, 1966.

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from a position of strength and is not as a result of either intellectual or moral argument:

> "These rights which employed people claim cannot be recognised and conceded on the theoretical or abstract plane and then not recognised and not conceded when they are translated into trade union practice. That they are recognised in this country is not due to intellectual or moral force of the argument advanced above, but to the efforts of working people in asserting and exercising them." (Page 30)

This argument which is supported by all the experience of the working class in the struggle for improved conditions and basic rights is in glaring contrast to the arguments advanced elsewhere in the evidence where there is a preoccupation with consultation by the Government and participation on Economic Development Councils. No satisfactory arguments are advanced anywhere in the evidence to demonstrate that the traditional methods of trade union struggle are now outmoded and are incapable of further advancing the interests of the working class. Experience during the years of the Freeze indicates beyond any doubt that when the traditional methods of industrial struggle are abandoned the living standards of the working class deteriorate.

Only through the so-called "wage drift", the direct industrial struggle at local level, has it been possible for the working class to offset the worst excesses of the monopoly capitalist system.

The State

In that section of its evidence dealing with "Trade Unions in Society", the TUC demonstrates the hostile environment in which trade unions have got to operate. The instigators of hostility are shown to be the property owning minority:

> "This minority, in whose hands have hitherto been concentrated the ownership of capital, and therefore authority and economic power, have naturally been distressed at both the prospect, and later in some measure the fact, of authority and economic rewards being shared more equally. Their's was not and could not be the perspective of working people and it is not surprising that they have never seen the case for trade unionism which instinctively commends itself to working people.
>
> "These differences in perspective continue to shape the external circumstances within which the trade unions operate. For example, the roots of English common law, comprehending the rights of property and the rights of the individual but not that of groups, unless they be corporations, naturally reflects the norms of an earlier society." (Page 62)

It is unfortunate that when the state and its functions are analysed, the role of this minority is ignored in the development of the modern state, which could be regarded only by the naive as being neutral. The state is described as "the personification of these Statutes, made by Parliament and the administrative framework of existing law, including common law, and as the functions which are performed, generally under statute by Government agencies, or by Government departments". In considering the role of the State it is pointed out that society comprises plural institutions, groups and individuals "with authority naturally distributed amongst them".

The Government through Parliament, it is stated, can mobilise the authority of the State in accordance with the wishes of the people to exercise a counteracting public power over that of private interests. Since the state reflects in the first instance the dominance of one class over the other, it will not act in the objective manner the evidence suggests. When the Government through Parliament mobilised the authority of the state in operating its Prices and Incomes Policy, this could by no stretch of the imagination have been seen as a counteracting public power over private interests, although, upon the interpretation of the TUC, this is what it said, and the TUC accepted it as such in practice. It was the authority of the state mobilised in the interest of the minority already mentioned.

The increasing State Legislation of wages should be seen as an attack on the trade union movement and not a development in which the TUC should seek to have a representative voice. Indeed even by the arguments set out in its own evidence, the TUC should be opposing this development:

> "It is where trade unions are not competent, and recognise that they are not competent, to perform a function, that they welcome the state playing a role in at least enforcing minimum standards, but in Britain this role is recognised as the second best alternative to the development by work-people themselves of the organisation, the competence, the representative capacity to bargain, and to achieve for themselves satisfactory terms and conditions of employment." (Page 69)

There is no indication in the evidence that the TUC is setting itself the task of establishing such an organisation, or developing such bargaining strength as would prevent the State regulating the wages of the entire labour force, although they do so under the guise of catering for the interests of low wage workers.

Industrial Democracy

Class collaboration at national level, if it is to be truly effective, must be based on a structure of class collaboration at local level. The form that this should take locally is set out very clearly in the paragraph dealing with industrial democracy:

> "In some of the most successful enterprises, it is already the custom for regular meetings of depart-

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> mental managers to include work-peoples' representatives in the discussion of current problems and the developments at the place of work." (Page 101)

By successful is meant, in this context, the achievement of the criterion which monopoly capital sets itself. Such success can never be in the long term interests of those who work. The object is to eliminate the class struggle at the point at which it is highly successful, the point of production.

By the involvement of trade unionists in managerial decisions, it is possible to undermine or totally neutralise the Trade Union resistance to the effects of these decisions when it is finally seen that by their very nature they are contrary to the interests of the workers. This, the evidence spells out very clearly:

> "The advantage of having work-peoples representatives actually taking part in the week by week meetings of the management, is that many developments can be launched on a mutually satisfactory basis without them ever becoming contentious issues between the work-people and management, leading to each side taking up an entrenched position." (Page 101)

In this section of the evidence, trade unionists are told that they must seek out the areas of co-operation with management and not exaggerate the differences which exist between them. Thus we find "apparent conflicts of function should not be exaggerated to become insurmountable obstacles as a result of pressing arguments to the logical conclusion". (Page 103)

Clearly they should be pressed to an illogical conclusion or not pressed at all. Having set out in considerable detail the methods by which trade unions can be represented at all levels of management, both in nationalised industries and in private industry, the evidence goes on to consider representation of Unions at board level. In order to achieve this it believes that legislation of a "discretionary character" would be widely welcomed and concludes:

> "compulsory legislation on a question of this character would prove very difficult to draft and although legislation has been used in precisely this field in other countries, it should be remembered that the real object is to encourage companies to recognise and to take advantage of the mutual benefits to be obtained from more active participation by trade union representatives in company policy and day to day practice." (Page 107)

There is nothing new, enlightened or progressive, in the proposals in this section. It is straightforward class collaboration at enterprise level, and is already in operation, in almost identical form to that proposed, in West Germany. Yet it cannot be argued that the German worker employed by Krupp or I.G. Farben enjoys greater rights at the point of production than does his British counterpart, who asserts those rights through the strength of his trade union organisation.

The Economy

The essence of Britain's economic problem is defined in the evidence as how:

> "to reconcile a range of objectives which are interdependent, but often in apparent conflict—sustaining full employment, restraining inflation, balancing overseas payments and preserving the value of sterling, at the same time as sustaining the rate of economic growth" (page 77).

In reviewing the historical background to the present economic situation the TUC recognises that the legacy of imperialism in all its facets, "both positive and negative", has a continuing influence on the economic situation. It refers to the exploitation of the British workers in the nineteenth century to provide a surplus for investment overseas and the subsequent exploitation of those overseas countries which reflected the economic power of Britain at that time. It is a serious omission in evidence as detailed as this, that no analysis is made of the effect of imperialism upon the development of the trade union movement in Britain.

The fact that British trade unions, operating in a metropolitan economy, have been largely able to resolve their most acute problems by industrial action alone, is ignored. The effect this has had upon the role of the trade unions in Britain and the posture in which they find themselves today is of immense political importance. Although it is pointed out in evidence that "Britain's economic problem ever since the war can in a phrase be said to be the balance of payments problem" (page 78), no analysis is made of the relationship of this problem to Britain's imperialist past and present role. Overseas military expenditure is not considered although this turns the balance of payments surplus of some £300,000,000 per year into a deficit. In the past when the British army was in India, the Indian people were forced to pay for it, when today there are British forces East of Suez it is the British worker who is forced to pay for it. Thus some of the exploitation which Britain could export in the past is now coming home and being borne upon the shoulders of the British working class.

There is no recognition, even today with the increasing tempo of the national liberation movement, that a break with imperialist policies and the economic and social institutions that support them is a prerequisite for the more equitable society that the TUC expresses itself to be in favour of. Nor is the distribution of wealth which is referred to as "grossly unfair" related to Britain's imperialist past, although the level of distribution has remained almost unchanged since 1880.

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Prices and Incomes Policy

To maintain this situation internally, in the face of fundamental external changes, has meant the necessity for the ruling class to introduce sophisticated methods to offset the logical demands of the working class, hence we have the Prices and Incomes Policy. In reviewing its attitude to the Prices and Incomes Policy since the joint Statement of Intent on Productivity, Prices and Incomes, in April 1966, the TUC points out that it has attached great importance to the fact that, as part of a plan for general recovery, emphasis will be laid on the need for increased output and the relationship between output and incomes as a whole. This is recognised as "a desirable shift from the previous tendency of governments to concentrate on the incomes aspect of the relationship and, within incomes on wages". It also expressed its dislike of compulsion stating "it must be based on a voluntary but also collective effort, both sides of industry working with the Government" (page 79).

Yet in practice, while the TUC reluctantly acquiesces, the emphasis has been on wages, and the measures introduced last July were such as to take from trade unionists the most elemental rights established out of generations of struggle. It is stated in the evidence, that Britain's trade problems "do not derive from the fact that wages in Britain are high" (page 77) and "the influence which working people have on the rate of economic growth can be grossly exaggerated" (page 76), yet nevertheless they see the Prices and Incomes Policy as "constituting a double challenge to trade unionists, not merely to limit their wage demands in accordance with the agreed criteria, but also to review the traditional practices and attitudes towards productivity it issues".

Frequently, in the evidence, the need for full employment is emphasised, yet the TUC apparently fails to accept that many of the traditional practices and attitudes to productivity issues which it now asks the trade unions to ignore, have historically played an important part in limiting the level of unemployment. Although the incomes policy is posed as an alternative to the "stop-go" with its attendant unemployment, the fact that in practice the incomes policy, with its deflationary aspects, has resulted in over half a million unemployed is not dealt with.

In attempting to operate a voluntary wage-vetting system, the TUC is merely acting as a Government agency. In practice, it is evident that the only basis on which the Government will accept this collaboration is if it can be shown that the TUC would be more successful and ruthless in holding down wages than is the Government. As the TUC increasingly occupies itself with wage-vetting committees, productivity and economic development councils, it cuts itself off from the source of its real strength, the power of the industrial working class at the point of production. The very structure of the trade union movement is being modified to cater for this increasingly bureaucratic role. Thus we find references to trade union competence as depending "on unions developing specialist services, such as research, in order to take full advantage of, and to make a real contribution to, new fields of responsibility such as economic planning" (page 46).

The concept of ending the free-for-all of capitalism and replacing it with economic planning will appeal to most trade unionists. However, economic planning is only acceptable if it serves the interests of the working class. The belief that it could do so in an economy in which 80 per cent of industry is in private hands and that concentrated within the powers of 40 or 50 monopolies, is not facing up to the reality of the political situation. The February 28th meeting of TU executives this year, showed that only a slight majority of those affiliated to the TUC now support its voluntary wage vetting system. However, so long as those who oppose State (or TUC) regulation of wages, limit their opposition to mere verbal belligerence, the Government's Prices and Incomes Policy presents a real threat to the whole of the British trade union movement.

Trade Unions and the Law

There has been an unfortunate tendency in recent months for trade unions, otherwise regarded as being progressive, to go to the courts to have agreements and contracts between themselves and their employers enforced. This reflects in the first instance a basic industrial weakness, exposing the inability of the union to enforce the agreement by its own strength. In almost all those cases arising from a breach of an agreement as a result of the Prices and Incomes Policy, the Government has, in any case, intervened if the court has found in favour of the union, and the desired result is not in any case achieved.

This process however, does the whole of the trade union movement a disservice in that if a court enforces an industrial agreement for the union, it will by implication, enforce such an agreement for an employer. This brings the whole question of industrial relations within the orbit of the courts, and is something which trade unionists have historically resisted. It is encouraging therefore, to see that in its evidence, dealing with industrial relations and industrial disputes, the TUC strongly advocates no interference by the law. Of the procedure agreement, it says for example "to order and require the parties to conform to the procedure in the circumstances, would be misguided in principle,

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quite apart from being impossible to enforce. It cannot be the object of industrial relations to achieve conformity without regard to the underlying causes of the conflict" (page 117). Its recognition of the class role of the courts is frankly expressed, "trade unionists have always been, and continued to be, very suspicious of the law and the judges who appear to make the law in their own image" (page 125).

Rank and file trade unionists have always advocated the use of traditional industrial methods to establish recognition in that it establishes a relationship of trade union strength at the point of production. The TUC in its evidence generally supports this concept. "Trade unions have not been granted privileges, they have fought for what they have achieved. If they had been granted privileges, it may well be logical to argue that the right to bargain has been granted by the Government and the Government could take it away" (page 133). In respect of the famous case of Rookes versus Barnard, the evidence suggests that "the judges had usurped their function in making such a devastating attack on the intention of Parliament" (page 124).

The intention of Parliament in question, was that contained in the 1906 Trades Disputes Act. This case, as finally decided in the House of Lords, showed that Sections 1 and 3 did not mean what they had always been thought to mean. It was typical of British law, that the judges, in playing their class role, were able to seek out a precedent which had been established in entirely different circumstances. The key to the judgement was the discovery of the tort of civil intimidation to a trader for firing his cannon near to the canoes of customers off the Cameroon coast, in order to scare them from trading with his rival. In supplementary evidence, the TUC have put forward a suggestion for a new law which would make the breach of a contract no longer unlawful for the purpose of the law of tort, or the criminal law. This would thereby, also abolish the tort of civil intimidation in its new form. Such a law would enable trade union officers to do their job as negotiators free from the fear that each time they warn of industrial action, they may be taken to the courts for interfering with business, for conspiracy or on other grounds which the 1964 Rookes versus Barnard case gave rise to.

The Royal Commission

The evidence as a whole reflects the serious degeneration of the whole of the British trade union movement. The Trades Union Congress has been in continuous existence since it was founded in 1868. Its first Congress was attended by 34 delegates who represented 118,000 trade union members. The 1966 Congress was attended by 1,048 delegates from 170 unions with 8,867,522 members. That this tremendous potential force of working class strength has degenerated into the mere peddler of the "planned toryism" of the Labour Government is a condemnation of the whole of the labour movement. In the introduction to the evidence it is stated "the trade union movement in Britain is fortunate in having only one national centre". But unity in a class sense is only positive if it promotes the interests of that class. In any case, individual affiliated unions, even in a minority position, have a responsibility to their members and a constitutional right within the TUC to pursue industrial policies in accordance with their own Conference decisions. Such progressive minorities could act as a stimulus to the whole of the movement.

When the Royal Commission reaches its final conclusions, it will do so on the basis of the relationship of the class forces that exist at that time. They will see a trade union movement whose vigour and energy has been damped to the point of retreat by a class collaborating national leadership, a movement which has had imposed upon it and accepted, restrictive measures which were not even imposed during the emergency of the last war. They will take fully into account that the body which should have co-ordinated the resistance to the current attack has acquiesced.

The evidence is extremely comprehensive, and is well presented and detailed within the premise the TUC has set itself. However, a much shorter statement which indicated clearly that the TUC would not stand by and watch the destruction of rights established out of generations of struggle and sacrifice by working people, would have been far more effective and appropriate. Such trade union rights as do remain when the Commission finishes its work, will not result from fear of the TUC in its chosen role as the Government's Industrial watchdog.

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Marshall McLuhan—Genius or Fakir?

Sidney Finkelstein

We reprint below an article from the American Dialog *of autumn 1967, by Sidney Finkelstein author of* Art and Society, How Music Expresses Ideas *and other works on music, art and society. The sub-heads, apart from the four main divisions of the article, are ours.*

PROPHETS once cried out in a wilderness, but this is not true of the brilliant Canadian, Marshall McLuhan. His theory that a revolution has been taking place under our noses without our awareness of it, namely, the "media" revolution of radio and television, and his novel way of writing about this "revolution", a style known as "McLuhanese", have made him today perhaps the most quoted personality in American cultural life. There is hardly a publication dealing with either the fine arts or the mass media in which he is not regularly mentioned or quoted. He has added phrases and terms to popular currency such as "the medium is the message" and his description of all "media" as either "hot" or "cool". A magazine cartoon shows a store with a sign in the window, "McLuhanese spoken here".

The book in which McLuhan develops his theories most fully, *Understanding Media: the Extensions of Man*,[1] made a sensation in hard cover and is a best seller in paperback. Some reasons for its appeal seem obvious. Here is a professor, formerly of English literature, who not only embraces the whole field of "popular culture", including radio, TV, comic strips and newspaper ads, but also declares this to be the real, important art of today. All the other traditional arts which do not fit the requirements of the "new media" are moribund hangovers of the past. He seems to be crying: Let us be bold, let us welcome the new dawn!

True, there are unco-operative readers who suffer from an old-fashioned prejudice which asks a professor who writes non-fiction to pay some attention to whether what he says is true or not. But according to McLuhan's theory of "media", such complainants are only hopelessly addicted to the laws of the "Gutenberg" or "print" medium, with its "linear structure of rational life". Translated out of McLuhanese, this means that the old book or print "medium" involved statements that had some agreement with reality and were put in rational sequence. McLuhan's is a new kind of book. An apt foreword to it would be: *No statements in this book are necessarily to be taken as true. The author is not concerned with whether they are true or not. Any agreement between what this book says about history and what happened in history is purely coincidental.* McLuhan has accomplished the brilliant feat of writing a book which raises the discussion of the arts, cultural sociology and history to the level of a TV commercial.

[1] Marshall McLuhan—*Understanding Media: the Extensions of Man*, Sphere Books Ltd., London, 10s. 6d.

McLUHANESE HISTORY

Just as a TV commercial devotes only a small fraction of its time to describing its product, using the rest to soften the viewer's mind, so McLuhan devotes only a fraction of his book to his real subject, the modern electronic "media". For most of it he zigzags up and down, back and around the whole history of human society and culture, spilling out theories which have an effect on the real knowledge of history something like that of an aviator defoliating the Vietnamese forests. He offers a "media" view of history and for this purpose he designates as media the most disparate phenomena, such as languages, alphabets, arts, crafts, machines, books, printing, clocks, computers, sciences, technological inventions, radio and TV stations. Here is a sample of his history:

> "The alphabet was one thing when applied to clay or stone, and quite another when set down on light papyrus. The resulting leap in speed and space created the Roman Empire."

Comment: Does McLuhan mean that the Roman Empire was built not on military conquest and slave-holding but on an early paperback industry? And why did the Romans beat the Greeks, who had both the alphabet and papyrus? Why didn't the Greeks, or the Egyptians, who also had both, create a Roman Empire before the Romans?

However, to McLuhan, not only did paper create the Roman Empire, but the lack of it destroyed the Empire:

> "With the cutting off of the supplies of papyrus by the Mohammedans, the Mediterranean, long a Roman lake, became a Muslim lake, and the Roman center collapsed. What had been the margins of this center-margin structure became independent centers

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> of a new feudal-structural base. The Roman Empire collapsed by the fifth century A.D. as wheel, road and paper dwindled into a ghostly paradigm of former power."

Comment: A grisly scene rises before the eye, worthy of a Hollywood epic: the last Roman emperor quailing before the invasion of the Goths, crying "My kingdom for a piece of paper!" But aside from the fact that the internal collapse of Rome's slaveholding economy and the invasion of Germanic tribes, who refused to be enslaved or exploited, had something to do with the fall of Rome, McLuhan makes Mohammed into a miracle-worker who was able to destroy the Roman Empire a century before he was born. As McLuhan says, the Roman Empire collapsed in the fifth century. But Mohammed was born in the sixth century (A.D. 570).

Following this twisted track of McLuhanese history, the next great "media" revolutionist is Johannes Gutenberg, who printed a Latin Bible from movable type about 1437. Awesome are the wonders McLuhan ascribes to this. "Print created individualism and nationalism in the sixteenth century." A few pages later, we read: "The hotting up of the medium of writing to repeatable print intensity led to nationalism and the religious wars of the sixteenth century." A few chapters later: "Let us not forget that nationalism was a mighty invention and revolution that in the Renaissance, wiped out many of the local regions and loyalties. It was a revolution achieved almost entirely by the speed-up of information by means of uniform movable type."

Comment: The Chinese printed from movable type four centuries before Gutenberg. Why didn't the revolution start with them? And in the sixteenth century, whose upheavals McLuhan ascribes to the print "media", just how many people involved in these mass movements knew how to read?

Fiction or History

The revolutionary effect of the machine is described by McLuhan in these terms: "In the first great age of the substitution of machine for human toil Carlyle and the pre-Raphaelities promulgated the doctrine of *Work* as a mystical social communion, and millionaires like Ruskin and Morris toiled like navvies for aesthetic reasons. Marx was an impressionable recipient of these doctrines." *Comment:* McLuhan, typically, gets his dates mixed up. Carlyle started writing early in the nineteenth century, the pre-Raphaelite movement rose at about the mid-point, and William Morris wrote in the latter part of the century. Morris couldn't influence Marx, because Marx came first, and it was through the influence of Marxist thought that Morris became a socialist.

Morris was something less than a millionaire, and he didn't so much "toil like a navvy" as try—and with considerable success—to revive fine and creative craftsmanship as against the alienating effect on labour of the factory. What is most inane, however, is that McLuhan describes the age, so well documented by Marx, in which factories and industrial slums were growing like mushrooms, hosts of children were daily dragged out of bed to slave at machines, the working day was anywhere from twelve to sixteen hours, workers died like flies from inhuman conditions, and any attempts at working-class organisation were brutally suppressed—as "the first great age of the substitution of machine for human toil".

These samples of McLuhan's bizarre substitution of fiction for history are by no means cited to charge him with being ignorant. On the contrary, he is a very erudite and well-informed writer. These are calculated confusions. As with all processes of confusing the public, whether by TV commercial, a publicity campaign, or a political demagogue's speech, or a book like McLuhan's, it is always helpful to build the confusion on a nugget of truth. And there are these fragments of truth in all McLuhan's statements.

To get back, for example, to papyrus and the Roman Empire, the fact is that to administer such an empire, or the Egyptian Empire for that matter, would have been impossible without a mass of records, chronicles and scribes—in other words, without some form of writing on paper. And so it would be valid in this sense to say, "without paper, there would not have been a Roman Empire". But this is quite different from saying that paper, or papyrus, "created the Roman Empire". A real fact turns into a generalised untruth. Similarly, there was a period when the Mediterranean could almost have been described as a "Muslim lake", although this was much later than the date McLuhan ascribes to it. And the effect was not at all the collapse of European economy. It spurred the search for new trade routes to the East, that finally led to the discovery of the Americas and an influx of gold that gave a historic impetus to capitalist manufacture.

McLuhan's Message

Again, it is true enough that without the aid of printing, widespread literacy, books, newspapers, and periodicals, the nations and their industrial economy could not have come to their full development, as in the late eighteenth and nineteenth century. But this is quite different from saying that the "print medium" made the revolution.

Real history, then, is far more fascinating, as well as illuminating, than McLuhan's rewriting of it. He makes technological "media" the decisive force in

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history with a one-sidedness that far exceeds the economic determinism advanced by the worst vulgarisers of Marx. Why does McLuhan do this? The answer is that he has as little concern with truth as a modern public relations expert or a creator of TV commercials. His concern is with his "message", the thought he wants to implant in the reader's mind. This is that the modern electronic media, headed by television, constitute the new technological "revolution" that has opened up a new world and outmoded all previous "media", including books, novels, and all the arts—particularly in their previous humanist forms. And so he creates his own history of the world in terms of "media" and technology revolutions, while extracting "media" out of their social context and banishing any study of the social forces behind them.

Thus McLuhan replaces the famous opening sentence of the Communist Manifesto, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of class struggles" with his own radical improvement, which can be summarised as, "The history of all hitherto existing society is the history of media struggles". And he is quite explicit in treating the warfare among media as if they had an independent life of their own. Touching on the rise in early society of the "technology of writing", he comments that this meant "exchanging an ear for an eye".

Does he mean that as soon as people learned to write and read, they stopped listening? Don't we now, long after we have learned to read, still talk to one another, listen to music, go to lectures or to the theatre or turn on the radio? Again, he writes in a typical passage of McLuhanese historical confusion, adorned with his phony technological language, "When the press opened up the 'human interest' keyboard after the telegraph had restructured the press medium, the newspaper killed the theatre". Perhaps he means that with the press rose the drama critic, who killed the theatre with his lousy reviews? But the theatre isn't dead, people still go to plays, and if the theatre has died in many communities, it is not because people prefer to read the "human interest" columns in newspapers, or because the "medium" is outmoded, but because the living theatre does not fit into the capitalist market place and profit system.

This is another thing entirely, which McLuhan prefers to ignore, because he is all for the new media which not only happen to fit but are of extreme use in the marketplace. And so, when he comes to today, McLuhan gloats over the carnage in media. He quotes, approvingly, another writer: "Civil war has been raging in the world of art and entertainment. . . . Moving pictures, gramophone records, radio, talking pictures. . . ." And nowhere in this discussion does McLuhan give any inkling of the fact that the apparent war among media is due to their domination by profit-seeking and competition in the marketplace war.

THE MEDIUM AND THE DECEPTIVE MESSAGE

The key method of modern publicity and advertising is that a "message" must be implanted in the mind of the public without its realising that it has been manipulated. Thus if advertising simply aimed to tell the useful facts about a product it would not be a multi-million dollar industry turning hordes of talented writers and artists into well-paid serfs. Similarly in politics, a candidate for high office does not present his real views, but has a staff of publicity men and ghost writers who decide what "image" to create. Even the terminology is that of commercial victimising. He must be "sold" to the public. And, in both cases, there is not only the calculated assault upon the public, but an internecine war among the "media" manipulators. The process has invaded diplomacy, international affairs and the operation of wars.

In the Vietnam war, the hidden message within all the forms of publicity and news is that we are not fighting a people who have risen in anger against a foreign-supported murderous dictatorship but that we are fighting a "communist conspiracy". Thus it is an unwritten law of all news "media" that the Vietnam National Liberation Front must never be mentioned. The people we are fighting, are always "Vietcong" and the dead bodies on battlefields or bomb targets are always "dead communists". The real message lies not in what is said but in how it is said. It is this manipulation of people's minds without their knowing that they are being manipulated that is the heart of McLuhan's thesis, "the medium is the message".

Extensions of Man?

To bolster his argument, McLuhan throws the entire concept of "media" into utter confusion by calling them "extensions of man" or "extensions of the senses". It is a clever half-truth. For it is true enough that spoken and written languages, arts, crafts, even machines, are extensions of senses and powers—a constantly growing embodiment of human skills and perceptions that afford a means for exploring the real world and exchanging ideas about it. But the arts, crafts, technologies and communications also operate through social institutions, and these institutions are by no means necessarily "extensions of the senses", or "extensions of man". They may be assaults upon the senses and upon man. For example, a tool or machine may be called an "extension of man" in that it affords a new potentiality for transforming nature to human use.

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But a factory is not necessarily an "extension of man". When it is privately owned, it may be an "extension" of the owner's avarice for profits, but to the worker on the machine, it brings alienation from the fruits of his labour and from his own potential creativity. Similarly poetry, acting and dramatic techniques may be called extensions of the senses, but a theatre is a social institution. Due to a combination of lucky social circumstances a Shakespeare found a living theatre in London through which he could address a broad audience welcoming the clash of ideas, and so he could produce masterpieces of exploration of both inner and outer life. But no one could properly say that the present New York theatre, with its concentrations on tourist-attracting musical comedy concoctions is an encouragement to explore reality and a broadening of the senses.

Prose narrative is an extension of the senses but book publishers and manufacturers, book stores and newspapers are social institutions. They may operate to stifle perceptions. A still camera, a motion picture camera and even a television camera, accompanied by sound track recording, may be extensions of the senses, when in the hands of artistically gifted people. But a TV station or network is a social institution. It is largely dominated by advertisers whose interest is not in extending the human perceptions but in creating artificial needs in the public. It implants conditioned reflexes so that people will buy some commodity they don't need under one brand name instead of a similar commodity under another name.

The true "extensions of man" never war with one another. Each genuine innovation in art, for example, is a precious development of a new side of human sensitivity. The more such developments there are, the more they can co-operate with one another. But the social institutions flower at one time and collapse in another, and are subject to reactionary authority and marketplace war. And when this marketplace war operates to destroy or stifle some genuine art form, by making it "uneconomic", this is not what McLuhan makes of it; a perfectly normal process of one "extension" or "medium" replacing another. It is a barbaric destruction of a precious aspect of human sensitivity.

In the true "extensions of man", as in the arts, the very style of the artist, his way of using images and sounds, his handling of melodies, his drawing and colour, may reveal a good deal of his feeling for people and nature, or the extent of his humanisation of life. Furthermore, when the social institution itself opens up a broad and free avenue between the artist and the public, it creates a new potential for the development of his thought, and its very conventions and artifices become paths to freedom, becoming interwoven with his creative artistic thinking. In this sense, it is possible to say that "the medium" has a good deal of influence upon the "message", or the artists' outlook and thought. But this is quite different from saying that "the medium is the message".

When an avenue for art influences it by opening up new ways of involvement with life, it opens up a new stage of freedom, and as a result, not one "message" but a variety of different views and outlooks appear. So it was when the rise of the printed book, along with a broad, literate audience crossing class lines, stimulated the rise of such vastly different artists, as, in France, Balzac, Hugo and Flaubert; in Russia, Dostoievsky, Turgenev and Tolstoi; in England, Thackeray, Dickens, George Eliot and Thomas Hardy; in the United States, Mark Twain, Henry James and Theodore Dreiser. The "medium is the message" signifies the opposite; that both artist and public have lost their freedom.

Who Controls the Media?

It is in the "mass media" of today that the "voice of authority" controlling the social institution is most dictatorial, telling the artist what he can do and what he cannot do. The living relation to an active public disappears. And so the aspect of "media" as "extensions of man" or "extensions of the senses" disappears. And it is McLuhan's trickery that precisely when the "media" have thus lost their quality of being "extensions of man", that he hails them, as with television, as a climax of human development, a revolution in the "extensions of man".

Actually, the creative person serving such "mass media" is alienated from his own creativity, his own humanity, his own free sensory response to nature and people. He has become a serf. He is no longer manipulating the medium for his own expressive purpose and freely exploratory thought about life. Instead the medium is manipulating him. Behind it stands the marketplace, dictating what particular illusion he is to instil in the public's mind, and he obediently does this by playing upon the public's yearnings and fears. McLuhan calls this "giving the public what it wants". But "the medium is the message" really denotes that the public is victimised and the artist has given up all right to a mind of his own. That many talented people do this gladly and willingly, does not in any way alter the enslavement.

THE HOT MEDIUM AND THE COOL HAPPENING

It is when he is dealing with television that McLuhan shows the shrewd insights that have made many readers applaud him. He knows the television "medium" very well. He reiterates a truth that was well known before he wrote, but it is still worth

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repeating. It is that each "medium", being a different kind of appeal to the senses, makes its own demands upon style and form. A presentation cannot be effectively shifted from one "medium" to another, without a thorough revision. Modern Shakespeare directors, for example, have learned (without benefit of McLuhan) that the old bard's plays are best presented on a kind of stage approximating that which he wrote for, and not on the modern "curtain" stage, which is fine for Ibsen, Chekhov and Shaw. A good movie director knows that even though a sound movie seems to resemble the living stage, it makes different demands, and a play cannot be translated from the stage to the screen without a considerable overhauling, making it less an art of the word and more an art of the eye. A lecturer should know that a successful lecture in a theatre may not go well at all on television, but has to be recast in terms of the new "medium".

So, in what may be another keen insight, McLuhan says that Hitler could not have been a success, had there been television. But even if this were true, McLuhan omits to state that the reactionary German trusts which financed and built up Hitler could easily have found a different form of demagogy suitable for television. Indeed, in another context, McLuhan unwittingly shows how the pseudo-naturalism of television can be a most effective medium for deception:

> "On the Jack Paar show for March 8th, 1963, Richard Nixon was Paared down and remade into a suitable TV image. It turns out that Mr. Nixon is both a pianist and composer. With sure tact for the character of the TV medium, Jack Paar brought out the *pianoforte* side of Mr. Nixon, with excellent effect. Instead of the slick, glib, legal Nixon, we saw the doggedly creative and modest performer."

McLuhan points out shrewdly that the TV medium favours "processes". It does better with a rehearsal than with a performance of a symphony. It prefers informal, behind-the-scenes chit-chat by famous entertainers, as on the Steve Allen, Jack Paar, and Johnny Carson shows, to their stage images. But he neglects to point out that these are hardly major contributions to art.

Had McLuhan simply devoted himself to an honest, sober evaluation of TV, with its special qualities, its potentialities, its limitations, and the social structure behind it, he would have written a useful book, if not a sensational one. But instead he acts like the Messiah of a new revolutionary liberation of man. And one of the mystiques through which he does this, aside from his "history" of media, is his concept of "hot" and "cool".

The terms are taken from jazz slang. The swinging improvisational jazz of the 1930s and most of the 1940s was known as "hot jazz". Near the end of the 1940s, a trend developed, embracing a relatively few musicians working in "progressive jazz", that got to be known as "cool". It was a jazz of deliberate low dynamics, understatement and subtlety, in which the listener had to "feel" the basic rhythms within the off-rhythms, and in other ways fill in the musical gaps.

Types of Involvement

Had McLuhan pursued the subject further, he would have found out that such a distinction, if not the terms, had existed throughout the history of jazz. Always there was some jazz strongly propulsive in its emotional impact, while other jazz was reserved, witty, subtle, suggestive of things unsaid. And if he had gone still further, he would have discovered that in all the arts, a distinction like this exists. In classical music, for example, Beethoven and Schubert, with their direct dramatic appeal, tend to be "hot", if we employ this classification. A Mozart concerto or opera, with its witty understatement and economy, is the epitome of "cool". So in painting and literature, some artists work with powerful drama and others with subtle understatement. "Hot" and "cool" in this sense are characteristics of style, not of arts or "media".

But McLuhan is not at all interested in pursuing the concept as it actually involves the arts. Instead, having given his thesis a sort of authenticity by referring to "hot" or "cool" jazz, he departs from this to present an entirely different concept, which divides "media" themselves into "hot" and "cool". Thus, to him, the "print medium" and, in fact, everything done in book form, is "hot". All the great arts in their humanist development from the Renaissance to today, including painting and music, are "hot". Television, on the other hand, is "cool". And the terminology he turns to now is even trickier. For "hot" becomes "non-involved". "Cool" becomes "involved".

The truth is that all art which works as art involves the audience, arouses empathy, demands active participation. But there are two opposite kinds of involvement and participation. What one offers is an insight into life, "truth" to life. In other words, its experience passes through the medium of the conscious and thinking mind. The other short-circuits the thinking mind. Instead of thinking about life, it presents itself as a replacement of life. It offers itself as "environment". And the latter is what McLuhan calls "involvement".

Thus, in the great paintings, etchings, dramas and novels of the classical, social-minded and humanist tradition which are in what McLuhan would call the old "hot" and "low-participation" media, we may see what appear to be replicas of life, nature, people in social relations. But we do not think of the works as being actual reality. If it is a painting of an ocean, we do not expect it to be watery when

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we touch it. If it is a novel, we do not take it to be biography or documentary history. If it is a tragic drama, we know that the bodies on the stage are not really dead. If they were, our reaction would be entirely different.

Thus the central aspect of this kind of art, or medium is that it illuminates or comments on reality, gives us new insights into it, but does not offer itself as physical reality. We may be deeply moved by the memories it awakens in us of our own experience. They make us feel, even if not aware of why we feel so, a sense of kinship to the human portraits presented to us. We feel that if the work of art is talking of other people, it is also, in a way possible only to art, talking also of ourselves. And so the empathy, or participation, is a mediated one. It goes through a process. It stirs up our minds about a host of our own past events that are now drawn up to bear on it. Even if much of the new sensibility and outlook the work gives to us, through its very style of exploring reality, is not something we can translate into words, yet the process of appreciation is filtered through our mind, and has stirred up our thought.

When however in ancient Rome, the gladiators were forced actually to kill each other, or Christians and other victims were actually eaten by the lions, the audience reaction was much different. Here the physical impact is much greater, as with all naturalism, that replaces realism. This is not a commentary on life. However contrived, it is a slice of life. And so in a way, the audience could be said to participate strongly. That is, the immediate shock power is greater. But there is nothing to filter through the mind and the memories. There is no thought process involved. And although McLuhan does not happen to mention gladiatorial combat, this is a perfect example of what he means by "cool", "involved" and "high participation" art. And the epitome of this, to him, is TV. For TV does not appeal to the rational mind. It offers an appeal to all the senses at once; picture, motion, tactile, feelings, music, speech, noise. It drugs the mind, while gripping the body. It becomes not an insight into experience, but experience itself; a new "environment".

Truth Omitted

And again McLuhan is not in the least interested in rationality or truth. He writes with contempt of the print medium, saying that it is outmoded, a thing of the past, because it appeals to consciousness, and rationality, by being "lineal" and "sequential". Against this he throws the puerile argument that any particular moment of consciousness is not at all "lineal" and rational. But that is exactly why great art is great art. It offers the results of thought, the working out of ideas and views; not simply the process of feeling around for them. If art were simply a moment by moment replica of actuality, there would be no need for it. McLuhan's own book is a brilliant example of a treatise written with no rational order, proceeding like a patchwork stream of consciousness.

Never in McLuhan's book does he ever raise the concept of truth, or truth to life. There is no hint that what he calls "media" have any connection to the knowledge and exploration of an actual world. The most he will say is that some "media" are "informational". The real world is of no importance to him because, according to his theory, each medium replaces reality. Thus he writes: " 'The medium is the message' means, in terms of the electronic age that a totally new environment has been created". And his utter unconcern with truth or deception is indicated by this typical statement:

> "The ads are by far the best part of any magazine or newspaper. More pains and thought, more wit and art, go into the making of an ad than go into any prose features of press or magazine. Ads are *news*. What is wrong with them is that they are always good news. In order to balance off the effect and to sell good news, it is necessary to have a lot of bad news. Moreover, the newspaper is a hot medium. It has to have bad news for the sake of intensity and reader participation. Real news is bad news. . . . Ads, on contrast, have to shrill their happy message loud and clear in order to match the penetrating power of bad news."

The paragraph displays the contempt for people typical of a "media" theorist. He justifies his own disdain for truth by declaring that the people are not interested in truth or in knowing the real forces in the world that affect them. They are interested only in having their feelings twisted. And so the newspapers apparently made a colossal mistake in putting the end of the Second World War in big headlines. They should have found some bad news to feature.

Much of the theory by which McLuhan extols, television is drawn from pseudo-scientific theories that appeared in the 1920s and 1930s around various forms of non-objective art. Writers like Georgy Kepes, constructing optical illusions or tricks with perspective (most of which were well known to the Renaissance and Dutch painters), proclaimed that only through such altering or "opening" the vision could men's minds be "freed" for new ideas. This stood psychology on its head. For while human senses have continually grown and changed, it was always in collaboration with labour, thought and active involvement with reality. The change was in the direction of a richer and deeper sensory response to qualities in the real world. In the new

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topsy-turvy theory, however, a new, artificial "environment" had to be created, and this would alter the mind. As a matter of fact, these optical tricks, which were supposed to liberate the mind, have found their proper home in commercial art.

But such sham theories are too useful to die, and McLuhan revives this one, making it the base for his proclamation that each "medium" creates a new "environment". Thus television, to him, by being a new "environment", has brought about a radical alteration of human psychology. And at the same time, he offers himself as a spokesman for various other art trends, like op art, pop art, aleatory music and the "theatre of cruelty", which proclaim themselves as "environment", involving the viscera but not the mind. They also play out the sad drama of the modern artists' alienation or self-estrangement from his own social humanity.

An example of "environmental" art is a work by the painter Robert Rauschenberg, as reviewed by Grace Glueck in the *New York Times* of May 27th, 1967:

> "In line with his oft-expressed ideas of encouraging audience involvement, Mr. Rauschenberg's 'revolvers', big plexiglass wheels mounted one behind the other in motorised aluminium stands, invite—indeed depend on—the spectator's participation. The wheels, five to a stand, are stencilled with random words and photo-images—a tennis match, a trailer truck, Batman, an archaic statue, the labelled chassis of a car. Using pushbuttons, one can play a kind of visual roulette with them, spinning the discs to effect the chance relationship of the images."

This exemplifies what McLuhan calls "involvement". What he omits to mention is that it is a particularly brainless or mindless form of involvement. He doesn't call it visceral, but prefers "tactual", meaning that it involves touch sensations. And he becomes ecstatic over the way in which TV, by evoking touch as well as hitting so many other senses at once, opens up a new world. It replaces the old rational "hot" medium of reading, and literacy. By appealing at once to all the senses, he says, it recreates the whole man, as against the fragmented man of the literary era. Does the "TV child" become backward in reading? That is a sign of progress:

> "The tactual mode of perceiving is sudden but not specialist. It is total, synesthetic, involving all the senses. Pervaded by the mosaic TV image, the TV child encounters the world in a spirit antithetic to literacy. . . . The TV child cannot see ahead because he wants involvement, and he cannot accept a fragmentary and merely visualised goal or destiny in learning or in life."

"Synesthesia"

Wielding the loaded word "fragmented", McLuhan enthusiastically tears up the entire humanist cultural past, in favour of the new TV brainless "synesthesia". One might demur that cultural life from the Renaissance through the nineteenth century was not quite so "fragmented". The same person could read a novel and also look at a painting or listen to a piece of music. It is true that the effect of capitalist life has been to emphasise "specialisation". But this was not inherently a step backward. The answer to over-specialisation was not to appeal to all the senses at once. It was to see each "speciality", or division of labour, in its social context, and bring to it a social perspective. Thus a Rembrandt, Beethoven, Goya, Thoreau, Tolstoi, or a scientist like Einstein, each created in one medium, and yet were great in it precisely because they were not "fragmented". They approached their work as social minds. To McLuhan, however, the answer to specialisation is not to bring the branches of knowledge together, not to show how these branches interrelate in their social context, not to bring to people the many discoveries of the arts and sciences, but to discard reading books, or "visual structures", altogether, in favour of appealing to all the senses at once. The magic word for this new brainlessness is "synesthesia", the television culture of the future:

> "The Western way of life attained centuries since by the rigorous separation and specialisation of the senses, with the visual sense atop the hierarchy, is not able to withstand the radio and TV waves that wash about the great visual structures of abstract individual man."

No longer, to McLuhan, will people have to think, reason, generalise, or look for underlying laws in phenomena. The sense data of television, along with automation, computers and other electronic "media", will supply whatever people need to know. "Today it is the instant speed of electric information that for the first time permits easy recognition of the patterns and formal contours of change and development. The entire world, past and present, now reveals itself like a growing plant in an enormously accelerated movie." But to watch a growing plant in an accelerated movie gives no clue to what makes the plant grow. And a mass of accumulated data is never a substitute for the difficult and literate brain-process of understanding the forces behind them.

Perhaps the saddest aspect of this book is the spectacle it offers of a brilliant and well-stocked mind taking part in the popular game of undermining the entire humanist heritage of art and science, both by direct attack and by the indirect method of mocking the painfully achieved accumulation of knowledge through writing a travesty on it. This is not raised out of any nostalgia for the past. It is raised only because with the many and awesome problems confronting us, the loss of this heritage leaves us the more impotent. If we needed

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the McLuhans to show us the way, we would be in a mess, indeed. Fortunately, people by and large will not give up their thinking minds, although the fascination with McLuhan's book indicates how many who should know better are willing to do so.

Mess or Message?

Certainly television, computers, automation, have an enormous potential contribution to make to human welfare but not as replacement of reading, music or painting or as an exchange of new senses for old. The harsh truth underlying McLuhan's book, however, is one he will not admit. It is that the great monopoly corporations that run our social and economic life can only use these "new media" destructively. Occasionally, he hints at the problem. "Leasing our eyes and ears and nerves to commercial interests is like handing over the common speech to a private corporation, or like giving the earth's atmosphere to a company or a monopoly." And there is a moment near the end of the book when McLuhan seems to think that the great corporations will silently fold their tents and flit away. "With the electric technology, the new kinds of instant interdependence and interprocess that take over production also enter the market and social organisations." But other prognostications of the future look more like a fascist or corporate dictatorship:

> "We are certainly coming within conceivable range of a world automatically controlled to the point where we could say, 'Six hours less radio in Indonesia next week or there will be a great falling off in literary attention'. Or 'We can programme twenty more hours of TV in South Africa next week to cool down the tribal temperature raised by radio last week'. Whole cultures could now be programmed to keep their emotional climate stable in the same way that we have begun to know something about maintaining equilibrium in the commercial economies of the world."

Questions of Ideology and Culture

A Reply to Discussion

Brian Simon

THE Executive Committee's statement "Questions of Ideology and Culture", aimed to spell out in some detail the application of the Communist Party's policy, *The British Road to Socialism*, to the work of intellectuals generally, and of scientists and those engaged in creative artistic activities in particular. These constitute a growing section of the population—a section increasingly involved in political activity whose active support in the struggle for socialism must be won if *The British Road to Socialism* is to be made a reality. The Communist Party must, therefore, take active steps to clarify its policy in the fields with which this section of the population is specifically concerned.

But, of course, problems of science, of art and culture, are not of concern only to intellectuals. This is a point that the Communist Party, above all, understands. The most recent developments of science and technology, the nature of art and artistic activity, are of profound interest to the working class as a whole, as well as to their allies. The Executive Committee's statement on Ideology and Culture, therefore, touches on matters with which the working class is directly concerned.

It will be remembered that one section of the statement dealt specifically with the policy of the Communist Party in the transition to socialism, as outlined in *The British Road to Socialism*. This was the section on "Democracy", which was not directly referred to in the subsequent discussion in *Marxism Today*. Here it was made clear that the Communist Party, holding that revolutionary change may be brought about peacefully, sees the transition to socialism as involving an *enhancement*, an *enlargement* of democracy. "Communists see socialist democracy", it is stated, "as both a continuation and a qualitative extension of all that is best in democracy under capitalism". That the Communist Party stands for a multi-party system is stressed, as it is also in the introduction to the new edition of *The British Road to Socialism*, approved at the November Congress of the party. The E.C. statement stresses that socialist ideas will be fought for in open discussion, and this again is in line with the whole

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policy outlined in *The British Road to Socialism*, especially the section on "Socialist Democracy".

Winning Understanding of our Policy

An important political problem facing the Communist Party is precisely to find the way of gaining a wide understanding of our policy, as set out in *The British Road to Socialism*. This policy, based on a Marxist analysis of the specific conditions of Britain —of the relations of class forces and their development, of the political traditions of this country, etc.— is still not widely known, understood and appreciated, even if it was first adopted and published in 1951. Misconceptions about the attitude of the Communist Party to political, cultural and religious questions, propagated by the capitalist press, remain widespread, and these misconceptions serve to isolate the party, to make it difficult to win exactly those allies whose support is necessary if the struggle for socialism is to be victorious. The Executive Committee's statement makes it quite clear at the start that the purpose is to clarify the attitude of the Communist Party to the work of scientists, artists, etc., where these misconceptions are at their height, and so "to indicate . . . the grounds for joint discussion and action in the achievement of socialism". This, then, is the political importance of the statement.

Science and Art

Among scientists and creative artists—and this includes those working in the visual arts including films and television, writers, musicians, actors, etc.— there are many who reject the values of capitalism and are fully aware of its demoralising, anti-cultural character, but who have not, as yet, turned to the Communist Party. They have not done so partly because of deeply ingrained misconceptions regarding the Party's policy relating to the arts and sciences. Here the key points at issue are overtly stated in the Executive Committee's statement; in the section on science the need for "free confrontation of different scientific theories" is stressed, while the section on art equally emphasises the need to encourage "a variety of artistic approaches, subjects and styles". The Executive Committee state that they do not regard it as their function, either now or in the future, to "lay down a line" on science, or "to direct what should be written, painted or composed" in the arts or literature. These conclusions arise logically from the argument presented in the statement as to the nature both of scientific and of artistic activity, as well as from the role of the Communist Party in the transition to socialism as set out in *The British Road to Socialism*. Such laying down of the law—in both the sciences and the arts—implies a dogmatism which it is the purpose of the statement explicitly to disavow. The extreme importance of making these points quite clear at this particular stage in our history and development can hardly be overstressed; it is, in my view, a necessary condition for political advance.

In the discussion in *Marxism Today* which has followed the publication of the statement, the overall key importance of the statement as a clear exposition of the Communist Party's position has been widely welcomed. It was welcomed, for instance, by Honor Arundel, who states that many people involved in creative work "have fears that Socialism would straitjacket their activity"; by Hugh Bredin, who speaks as a Christian; by John Lewis, who writes that "it is undoubtedly important to state that under socialism there will be no fear of Party interference or control, but complete freedom of artistic creation and scientific research", and who refers to the statement as "a repudiation of the now abandoned policy of imposing a 'party line' in matters of literature and the arts generally, and even making pronouncements on scientific questions, such as relativity and genetics (Lysenko)" (Lewis's critical points will be discussed later); by Margaret Cohen who welcomes the statement "because it registers a clear departure from more old dogmatic positions" which "I believe have isolated many of us"; by Ken Geering who, although critical, stresses that "the suspicion of *diktat*, coercion and narrowness, which has its roots in past mistakes" has driven off our "could-be friends", and refers to the "general excellence of the E.C. statement"; by B. E. Leonard, who points out that an official "line" on the arts leads to dogmatism and so to a stagnation which affects not only the arts themselves, but "the whole political superstructure"; by K. J. Kewell, who stresses the need for variety in art if we are to build "the full colourful life of tomorrow" by M. A. Cohen who describes the statement as "a welcome one, declaring principles with which there will be widespread agreement" (though personally wishing it went further) and by others. The main direction of the statement—its main political purpose—has, therefore, received almost unanimous support in the discussion in *Marxism Today*.

Ideological Neutrality?

However there are some, and especially John Lewis, who are critical of certain aspects of the statement. According to Lewis the statement implies "a withdrawal from real ideological struggle" even the "calling off of the battle of ideas". The statement, he claims, puts a policy of "ideological neutrality", leading to class collaboration. Later he refers to "this apologia", and it is worth noting that, although he agrees on the importance of the statement in the words quoted earlier, he soon brushes off this aspect with an ironical phrase: is it really necessary, he

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asks, "to repudiate so much and to give such anxious promises of future good conduct?"

This is where we differ from John Lewis, though not in the terms he suggests. We think it is necessary to get the principle quite clear about the imposition of a "party line" on literature, the arts and sciences, and to do this is the declared object of the statement. This is not a matter that can simply be stated and then brushed aside, as Lewis suggests; it is a matter of high political importance which needs rational statement and argument. It was not the purpose of the statement to cover all aspects of the Marxist approach to ideology and the ideological struggle—to have done so would have only obscured its essential purpose. To criticise the statement for not including aspects of the ideological struggle with which it did not set out to deal is to miss the point entirely, while Lewis's deductions as to the implications of the statement are unwarranted.

There is nothing in the statement which implies the calling off of the ideological struggle. All would agree with John Lewis that one task of Marxism is "to combat the errors and illusions of contemporary thought", and, through ideological struggle, to achieve the hegemony of Marxism in the field of ideas. It goes without saying that the ideological struggle is an essential aspect of the political struggle, especially today, and must be prosecuted with energy and enthusiasm, and with an understanding that Marxism must itself develop, as science develops, and that its role is not only critical (as Lewis suggests) but creative, penetrating ever more deeply into the nature of society and social evolution, and pointing to the means to social transformation through struggle.

John Lewis's Criticisms

Lewis's contribution is based on a misconception —a misunderstanding as to what the statement sets out to do; or, if it is not based on a misunderstanding, it reveals a profound underestimation of the political importance of clarifying the position of the Communist Party in relation to the work of scientists and artists. There can be no question of the need to carry on, and to strengthen, the ideological struggle in every field; but what is also important is the method by which this struggle is carried on, especially under socialism. Are opposing, anti-Marxist views to be proscribed, or are these issues to be argued out, in full, open discussion? For historical reasons this has become an important question to answer, and the statement gives the Executive Committee's answer, as it was necessary that it should. But having said that, it might also be said that Lewis does not bring out the complex nature of the struggle, for instance, in the arts. He rightly criticises Zhdanov's standpoint as "the blanket rejection of bourgeois science and literature", but points to "informed criticism" which "clearly distinguishes between the culture revealing the real truth about man, and that which belittles and degrades him", saying that such criticism "moves in a very different direction to that advanced by the statement".

But this is not so; the statement clearly recognises that art and literature "can move people to progressive or reactionary ends", it also recognises the very real problems of developing a Marxist aesthetic —problems reflected, by the way, in the discussion in *Marxism Today* on "Marxism and Criticism", in relation, for instance, to the evaluation of poets like Eliot, Yeats and Pound. These questions are not simple, as I'm sure John Lewis would agree, but in putting these issues in the way it did, the statement does not provide, as Lewis suggests, "the easy-going acceptance of art for art's sake". This is a very exaggerated way of putting the point the statement *is* concerned to make: that the Communist Party does not see its function, under socialism, as to suppress a *variety* of artistic endeavour, but rather to encourage it, since without this, art and literature stagnate and fossilise, as history shows.

Freedom for Art

One of the main issues raised in the discussion is that of the limits of freedom for artists under socialism. Marguerite Morgan suggests that the Communist Party abnegates responsibility by not specifying what is required from artists, adding that "we cannot separate the problem of the artist from the general problem of the struggle for socialism". "Our artists", she writes, "must be worker-artists, rooted and involved in a socialist community". The Executive Committee's statement makes it clear that the Communist Party welcomes artists "who are committed to the struggle for peace, socialism and communism", and who will express these ideals in their work, and to this extent there can be no difference with Marguerite Morgan. But to make the standpoint of the Party clear in this way is not to *direct* the activity of the artists, as she seems to imply is desirable. Again, there may be artists who are not directly committed to socialism, but whose work can enhance the life of people living under socialism. What would be gained if they were denied the right to express themselves?

The question of censorship was raised by Hugh Bredin, who argues that it should be minimal and based on artistic rather than social or moral grounds, and by Ken Geering, who would keep out what he calls "dope", "shit", and other vicious aspects of "pop" anti-culture—and who would, therefore, use a moral criterion. This issue, as to the limits of what is permissive, certainly needs further discussion.

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But a key question was raised by Daphne Morgan, who asks what is meant by the "freedom" of the artist? Someone, she points out, has to take the decisions as to what is published or produced, e.g. to allot paper for a book, a theatre for a play, etc. These decisions should not, in her view, be taken by politicians, nor by academies (which tend to preserve established values).

Her own solution—"a democratic centralism for the arts"—is not altogether clear, though she asks that the decisions should be influenced by consumer preference. But just as, in *The British Road to Socialism*, it is proposed that the press should be controlled by a variety of democratic organisations, why should not publishing houses, theatres, etc. come under a plurality of control—municipal, trade union, co-operative, etc? While a complete freedom for the artist may be impracticable, since scarce natural resources are involved, plurality of control by democratic organisations of the means of performance and communication should provide a near approximation.

Much of the discussion in *Marxism Today* centred around questions of art and aesthetics. Both B. E. Leonard and Kevin Kewell stressed the need to develop Marxist aesthetics as a basis for value judgments, and this certainly is an urgent need. It will not, however, be simple, and, although much work has been done on this question in the past, the statement itself recognised that "much difficult and exciting work lies ahead" for those tackling this problem, and welcomed "the most extensive discussion in this field". This discussion is under way, particularly in relation to literature, and it must certainly be taken further.

Christian-Marxist Dialogue

The section on science sparked little discussion, though Harry Fomison asks how there can be planning in science without control and direction? Of course planning implies control, and the statement makes clear that scientists themselves must participate in this; the problem of finding a balance between free scientific inquiry on the one hand, and the planned development of science on the other will certainly present problems, as it does today both under capitalism and socialism. But experience shows that this problem is not insoluble, particularly where scientists themselves are closely involved, as they must be, in decision making as to the allocation of resources for scientific research. In any case most scientific research today, particularly in physics, requires a considerable degree of teamwork.

The Executive Committee's statement devoted an important section to the dialogue between Christians and Marxists, and, since its publication, this discussion has been taken further in many forms in different parts of the country. The contributions to this discussion carried on in *Marxism Today* in 1967 has now been published in a paperback entitled *Dialogue of Christianity and Marxism*, edited by James Klugmann.

The basis of this discussion and its value was outlined in the statement, but this aspect was scarcely referred to in the subsequent discussion. Margaret Cohen, however, writing as a teacher, particularly welcomed this section, saying that "I have found that some of my best allies in trying to do something about Vietnam have been my colleagues who have deeply held religious convictions". The value of the dialogue is, however, questioned by Daphne Morgan, who does not question the value of working with Christians on specific issues, but she fears that Communists may become identified with opposing sects and so subject to attack from all sides. The fundamental tenets of Christianity, she claims, are not relevant to the fight against imperialism.

But the purpose of the dialogue is, partly at least, to enable each side to reach a fuller understanding of each other's standpoint concerning the nature of man and his future. Such an understanding will facilitate and strengthen joint action for peace, against racialism, and on a whole number of social and political issues which affect the dignity of man, his position here on earth. That this is so is precisely the lesson of the dialogue, as it has been carried on to date. The dialogue is bringing the Communist Party into a new, direct contact with sections and organisations from which we have been isolated in the past. There is little danger in the Communist Party being linked up with any particular religious organisation or church, indeed a characteristic of the dialogue, and one of its most hopeful features, is the variety of religious organisations that have been represented, varying from Roman Catholics on the one hand to Quakers on the other. The unity in action which Daphne Morgan demands will be the more effectively achieved the more those concerned come to understand and appreciate each other's motives for action.

Christians, of course, represent (or, at least, influence) a considerable proportion of the population. To enter into a dialogue with them is to bring the Communist Party into touch with others genuinely concerned about the human predicament. This is hardly the case with Trotskyists and other splinter groups of the left with whom C. Finn suggests a dialogue be opened. Long experience has shown that the objective of these groups is to break the unity of the working class and, by adventurist actions, to sap its strength in the struggle for socialism. Against these influences it is as necessary

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now as it ever was in the past to wage an irreconcilable struggle.

Away from Dogmatism

I have not dealt with all the points raised in the discussion—only with the most important. There is no question that the Executive Committee's statement marks an important step in the move away from dogmatism, and in presenting the specific implications of *The British Road to Socialism* for creative workers generally, and those involved in the arts and sciences in particular. The new draft of the *British Road* sums up the essence of the statement in its fourth section entitled "The Building of a Socialist Society". Here it is stated that "creative artistic activity, experiment and innovation" will be encouraged under socialism, facilities for exhibition and performance made available, scientific inquiry involving the natural and the social sciences fully supported "and the free confrontation of ideas encouraged" (page 33). By these and other means, concludes the section on "Education, the Arts and Research", a socialist government" will help to cultivate, draw on, direct into new fields, the infinitely various abilities of people, and ensure that they find constructive and creative outlets" (pages 40-41).

This is the appeal that the Communist Party, the only party which stands for socialism, can and must make to the youth of today—presenting a perspective for the future which can harness and direct the enthusiasm, the creative potentialities, of the young. This is the perspective embodied in the Executive Committee's statement, and herein lies its political significance. Certainly, many of the issues raised need further discussion; but generally the statement contains a clear exposition of the Communist Party's position on several fundamental questions, and in so doing, lays the basis for carrying on the ideological struggle, now and under socialism, in a principled manner.

Discussion Contributions on :

Of Geese and Men

Ann Lawrence

JOHN LEWIS'S article "Of Geese and Men" (March issue) contains a number of distortions of arguments in reviews which I wrote for the *Morning Star* of books by Desmond Morris and Arthur Koestler (October 19 and November 30).

He is evidently not content with the distortions in his letters to the *Morning Star*, which I sought to correct at that time.

So I feel obliged to try and set the record straight a second time.

He writes: "There are some who go so far as to see grounds of hope in peaceful tendencies derived from our pre-human ancestors—our heritage being derived both from them and from early man the killer", and he credits me with this view.

What I wrote, among other things, in my review of *The Naked Ape*, by Dr. Desmond Morris was that:

> "*Perhaps* (italics mine) it is through this kind of work by zoologists and others that modern man will be able to establish his real identity and to evolve a new moral code which is not crippled by ideas of original sin and the evilness of human nature."

John Lewis also accuses me of rejecting the economic and class explanation of war.

He seeks to "prove" this by reference to a paragraph in a review I wrote of Koestler's *The Ghost in the Machine*.

Since the entire paragraph would prove nothing of the sort he cuts out the middle section.

Argument Distorted

Koestler, in his book, uses terms like "self-assertiveness" and "self-transcendence". In my criticism of Koestler I made use of his own terminology. What I wrote was:

> "But wars and social upheavals are not started by a sudden urge by ordinary people towards 'self-transcendence'. They are started by the self-assertiveness of individuals or groups who *because of the social position they occupy* either use this power to persuade people that what is good for General Motors is good for the rest of us, or exercise their self-assertiveness in such a way as to make life intolerable for the majority."

It must take a great deal of ill-will to distort this argument in the way John Lewis has done. He has misrepresented the whole spirit of my review which

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was a criticism of Koestler's seeing man in isolation from his social environment.

The great part of my brief review of Dr. Morris' book was devoted to explaining what his ideas were. I summarised his arguments in this way:

> "Man became a murderer with the development of artificial weapons. These enabled him to attack at a distance when his enemy's 'appeasement signals', so important at a primitive level, could not be seen and killing was the result."

John Lewis gives a potted version of Konrad Lorenz's ideas—"the instinct to dominate and destroy can be modified if the inferiors will learn abasement and submission".

Then he writes: "Ann Lawrence sees this as the most hopeful sign of how evolution is showing us the really effective way out of war."

This is just not true, as anyone can see who reads the review as originally written and not as "edited" by Lewis.

These are not the only distortions. Lewis implies, under the heading "Credentials please" that Desmond Morris is no specialist in animal behaviour. In fact, as many people know, Morris's "credentials" were sufficient for him to be appointed curator of mammals at the London Zoo.

John Lewis clearly has little real confidence in his own arguments or he would not resort to tactics of this sort.

Disagreeing with Morris is one thing, misrepresenting him another.

When anti-communists use such tactics we quite rightly protest. When contributors to *Marxism Today* use them, it is quite intolerable.

Jack Dunman

THE controversy between John Lewis and Ivor Montagu is a timely and valuable one. Montagu's case is strongly supported by varied scientific studies, and also fits in with common observation, and is well summed up when he asks "When did his (Man's) behaviour cease to include any elements of pre-human pattern? Surely the contention that, from certain, now it contains none—is the one supremely improbable speculation". He is justified also in the suggestion that Lewis' absolute gulf between man and animals in practice postulates a "creation" at some point.

I would criticise Montagu only that he sometimes leans a little backwards in his anxiety to minimise the link with animals.

In one sense, however, this link is of only academic importance, though Lewis is absolutely right to combat so fiercely its current use to support reactionary politics. Montagu asks "what conceivable urging, other than social conditioning, could induce an American in the USA to gear and prepare the use of naplam against a Vietnamese 10,000 miles away, whom he never sees?" Fair enough: but one can ask a counter-question: "What kind of social-conditioning could by itself amount to the horrors of the nazi concentration camps?" The demands of class struggle might explain the destruction of opponents in millions, but can the wanton cruelties which were perpetuated, apparently for their own sake, be so explained? Is there not such a thing as sadism? Or, on a lower level, some grain of truth in the current theory that some car drivers behave "aggressively", with no result except some inexplicable satisfaction, and endangering their own lives and other peoples?

This raises the question of whether cruelty and sadism are found in animals. As a not too well-informed layman I would say not: but they *are* found in humans. If one should not blame the animals for them, whence do they come? Simply from the class struggle? Logically, Lewis would have to say yes, and from nowhere else. It is very hard to accept, and is too closely related to the idea that all problems disappear with the establishment of socialism. And Lewis himself seems to be highly contradictory on this basic problem. On page 81 he says "Reason has to overcome, in the development of the individual, not inherent evil, but pre-occupation with its own interests to the exclusion of the interests of others". Absolutely correct. But on page 82 he says "But these evils are not attributed by Marxism to original sin, or to man's incurable propensity to self-interest. . . ." Man has to combat "pre-occupation with his own interests"; but "a propensity to self-interest" is on the level of original sin and other mediaeval concepts. What is the difference between "propensity" and "pre-occupation"?

Most people I believe find it a bit of a struggle to behave as consistently decent human beings, let us be thankful so many succeed as much. But common experience and common sense are reliable guides in suggesting that what they have to struggle with is *both* a "propensity to self-interest"; which is partly curable but unlikely to totally disappear, and with certain passions, instincts, weaknesses, call them what you will, some of which are related to our animal ancestry. The point of studying this relation, is that understanding it will help us to control its effects within ourselves.

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